

# International militaries and postwar security in disputed areas

*The purpose, outcome, and potential of KFOR in  
Kosovo*

By Morten Stemre



Master Thesis

Department of Political Science

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IV

## **Abstract**

This study takes a conceptualising approach to the case of KFOR and Kosovo. To understand the purpose, outcome, and potential of KFOR in the Kosovo conflict, and to allow for this understanding to have potential validity beyond this specific case, it was essential to clearly define KFOR as a concept. KFOR is understood as an international military presence responsible for the security component of a postwar statebuilding mission, a concept which consists of the provision of a secure environment, which is not statebuilding per se, and the statebuilding aspect, which is the establishment and development of the Kosovo Security Force.

In addition to the mandate of KFOR, an analytical framework, focused on the relation between the population of an area and the international military of the postwar statebuilding mission in it, is applied to define the purpose and outcome of KFOR, a framework consisting of the duration dilemma and factors affecting susceptibility towards the dilemma, namely the footprint dilemma, type of intervention, and threat environment. The analysis is conducted by applying the framework from the perspective of KFOR exclusively, and by abandoning a unitary concept of the Kosovar population due to the point that the concepts of the framework perhaps should be understood differently among Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. The thesis also provides an alternative analysis of the civil disorder of 2004 to the one by David M. Edelstein in the chapter where the applied theoretical framework was developed.

The analysis focuses on the externalisation of the security forces of Belgrade from the perspective of the Albanians, and the protection against inter-ethnic violence within Kosovo from the perspective of the Serbs. The concept of a recognition game, based upon a work by Rick Fawn and Oliver P. Richmond, is also applied, and it is argued that the rejection of the authority of the autonomous security institutions of Kosovo by Serbs should be understood as being caused in part by attempts to undermine the authority of the government in Pristina, but also due to the fact that those institutions lack credibility as security providing institutions for the Serbs in Kosovo. On the possible future implications it is suggested that a political solution to the conflict could be dependent on an international security guarantee for the Serbs in Kosovo, and that KFOR appears to be the most credible guarantor from the perspective of the Kosovo Serbs.



## Acknowledgements

The idea for this study originates from a long lasting interest in Balkan affairs and the conflicts that occurred during the break-up of Yugoslavia. I cannot recall any specific moment or event that sparked the interest, but it is perhaps rather natural for a young, European student of political science and security that the most recent conflicts of the Western Balkans occupy a prominent place within his academic fields of interest. They are the European conflicts of my lifetime.

Shaping and developing an academic interest into a specific study and thesis has been made so much easier by the highly valued counsel and guidance of my supervisor, Magnus Petersson from the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies (IFS). Always available, Magnus has contributed with helpful answers, insightful suggestions, and to fruitful discussions, without which this thesis would not be what it is today. I must also direct gratitude towards his colleagues at IFS, Paal Hilde and Ingrid O. Busterud, for their assistance and feedback in the process. Furthermore, I am very grateful for the generous scholarship awarded by the “NATO in a changing world” research programme at IFS.

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VII





# Table of Contents

<i>List of tables</i>	<i>XI</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>XII</i>
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Research question and theoretical framework	2
1.1.1 Elaborations on the research question	2
1.2 The dilemmas of postwar statebuilding security	4
1.2.1 The dilemmas and factors in the case of Kosovo	5
1.3 Statebuilding and security in the recognition game	7
1.4 Research method	8
1.5 Disposition of the thesis	9
2. Conflict background and overview	11
2.1 Historical context	11
2.1.1 Developments from 1989 until the Kosovo War	12
2.1.2 The Kosovo War	13
2.2 Kosovo and sovereignty	14
2.3 KFOR	16
2.3.1 Mandate and footprint	16
2.4 The civil disorder of March 2004	18
2.5 The civil disorder of March 2008	20
2.6 The escalating tensions of 2011	21
3. Purpose, theory & research method	23
3.1 Purpose of study	23
3.1.1 Scope of research	23
3.1.2 The choice of theoretical framework	24
3.1.3 Theoretical ambitions of the study	26
3.2 Theoretical framework	27
3.2.1 The applied security concept	27
3.2.1.1 Human security	28
3.2.2 Security in postwar statebuilding	28
3.2.3 The dilemma of postwar statebuilding	31
3.2.3.1 The <i>duration dilemma</i>	31
3.2.4 Susceptibility factors	32
3.2.4.1 The footprint dilemma	32
3.2.4.2 Type of intervention	33
3.2.4.3 Threat environment	34

3.3 Research method and operationalisation	34
3.3.1 External validity and population	35
3.3.2 Why case study? – Internal and conceptual validity	37
3.3.3 Operationalising the duration dilemma	38
3.3.4 Operationalising the footprint dilemma	41
3.3.5 KFOR: Which type of intervention?	42
3.3.6 The threat environment of Kosovo	43
4. KFOR and the duration dilemma: the past and the present	49
4.1 The civil disorder of 2004: duration dilemma for KFOR?	49
4.2 KFOR and the Kosovo Albanians	54
4.3 KFOR and the Kosovo Serbs	58
4.4 The “recognition game” in Kosovo: a duration dilemma in reverse?	61
5. Conclusions and implications	65
5.1 Analytical summary	65
5.2 Possible implications	68
5.2.1 The military duration dilemma in an unresolved political conflict	69
5.2.2 The postwar potential of military force in disputed areas	71
5.3 Proposal for future research on the Kosovo case	73
Bibliography	77

## List of tables

### *Chapter 3*

Table 3.1 Satisfaction with the work of KFOR, by ethnicity	40
Table 3.2 Opinion on final status for Kosovo, by ethnicity	43
Table 3.3 Percentage of population identifying Belgrade's influence as causing inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo, by ethnicity	45
Table 3.4 Feeling of Safety vs. Crime and Violence when outside, by ethnicity	45
Table 3.5 Feeling of Safety on the streets, by ethnicity	46
Table 3.6 Percentage of respondents identifying "further aggravation of interethnic relations" as the circumstance most threatening to the stability of Kosovo, by ethnicity	46
Table 3.7 Opinion on the biggest problems faced by Kosovo, percentage by ethnicity	47

### *Chapter 4*

Table 4.1 Main institutions providing security, by ethnicity	59
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## Abbreviations

BATNA	: Best alternative to a negotiated agreement
EU	: European Union
EULEX	: European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
FRY	: Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
HRW	: Human Rights Watch
ICG	: International Crisis Group
ICJ	: International Court of Justice
ISSR	: Internal Security Sector Review
KFOR	: Kosovo Force
KLA	: Kosovo Liberation Army
KPC	: Kosovo Protection Corps
KPS	: Kosovo Police Service
KSF	: Kosovo Security Force
LDK	: Democratic League of Kosovo
MTA	: Military Technical Agreement
NAC	: North Atlantic Council
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Association
OAF	: Operation Allied Force
OSCE	: Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
R2P	: Responsibility to protect
UN	: United Nations
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNMIK	: United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNSC	: United Nations Security Council

## 1. Introduction

During the last half of 2011 it became obvious that the unresolved conflict over sovereignty in Kosovo still creates security challenges, as attempts by the government of Pristina to exercise control over border posts in the North were met by Serbian resistance, in the end requiring intervention by KFOR. There are inherent tensions between the separate groups in Kosovo that still re-emerge at times. NATO through its Kosovo Force (KFOR) is continuing to play a role. Consequently, it is highly relevant to pursue an understanding of the role and purpose of KFOR in the postwar statebuilding mission, the evolution of that role and purpose, and furthermore, the perceived benefits of KFOR's presence for the Kosovar population. This is how we can understand the potential, limitations, and key challenges for a military presence operating under the special circumstances of the Kosovo case.

Although an issue seeded deep in history, the birth of the modern day conflict may be attributed to the revocation of Kosovo's autonomous status in 1989, resulting in the strengthening of movements opposing the Serbian authority within the Albanian majority of the Kosovar population. Initially passive, towards the end of the 1990s the independence movement turned gradually more violent with the emergence of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) who attacked military, police, and civilian Serb targets in Kosovo. The Milosevic regime of Belgrade responded with harsh measures, to which the international community reacted with strong concerns. Its efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully did not bear fruits, resulting in the initiation of Operation Allied Force (OAF) on March 24, 1999, a NATO operation without a UN mandate. After 78 days of aerial bombardment, the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) is signed between the parties. It was endorsed by the Security Council (UNSC) in resolution 1244, and the international presence in Kosovo was born.

The conflict in Kosovo is one of strong inter-ethnic tensions and a dispute over sovereignty and territorial integrity between Serbs and Albanians. Serbs in Kosovo and the Serbian government consider Kosovo a part of Serbian territory, whereas the Kosovo Albanians want Kosovo as an independent state. Under the international presence, Kosovo became an international protectorate and a *de facto* state, declaring independence in 2008. Although an independent Kosovo appears to be the only viable solution, that political reality has still not materialised formally. The ambiguity is obvious in the mandate of the international presence,

which stems from the aforementioned UNSCR 1244. It recognises Kosovo as part of Serbia, yet simultaneously mandates the statebuilding of autonomous institutions in Kosovo. It is within this context that KFOR performs its tasks. Originally a security force of approximately 50 000, its presence at the time of writing only amounts to around 5 000. Apart from a responsibility for the establishment and provision of a secure environment, KFOR and NATO also assumed responsibility for the development of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) following the declaration of independence in 2008. How do the special circumstances of the Kosovo conflict affect the performance of these tasks?

## **1.1 Research question and theoretical framework**

The research question studied in this thesis is as follows: *What has been the purpose and outcome of KFOR's presence for the postwar statebuilding mission in Kosovo and the Kosovar population, and what can be the perceived utility of a continued international military presence for both the statebuilding mission and the population?* The relevance of KFOR's continued presence will in other words be analysed from the perspective of its relation to the Kosovar population. How is KFOR's presence perceived as beneficial (if it is) to the population in Kosovo? Furthermore, the final question of the former section alludes to another important aspect of the study, namely how dynamics in the special political circumstances of the Kosovo case affect the work of KFOR; both by creating direct security challenges, but also influencing KFOR's relation with the Kosovar population. This will be accomplished by applying a theoretical framework centred on the concept of a *duration dilemma* for international militaries in postwar statebuilding, and factors affecting susceptibility towards said dilemma.

### **1.1.1 Elaborations on the research question**

An immediate question that can arise is: what is the purpose of studying KFOR in particular instead of the international presence more broadly? Firstly, by studying KFOR one can study the role NATO is likely to play if they are to take part in postwar statebuilding missions similar to the one in Kosovo, and focus on the challenges the Alliance needs to be aware of when undertaking such a task. Furthermore, among academic works on Kosovo within the literature on statebuilding missions, there is not exactly an abundance of studies which are predominantly concerned with the implications of the special circumstances of the Kosovo issue for KFOR exclusively. This contributed to the belief that there is some unexplored

potential which could yield useful analytical conclusions. Lastly, that very belief was to a certain extent developed when reading about the theoretical framework being applied as an analytical tool to the Kosovo case in the thesis. It is the ambition of this thesis to improve on our understanding of the theoretical framework applied, and develop a stronger understanding of how we can understand these concepts under the specific circumstances of the Kosovo case.

Thus, the theoretical framework is focused on the relation between a population and the international military presence responsible for security in the postwar statebuilding mission. As revealed in surveys from UNDP Kosovo, on which more detailed information is provided in sections to come, the perceptions of the separate institutions in Kosovo differ greatly in the population of Kosovo. Hence, it can be difficult to study such dynamics if we look at a sector containing several institutions. These realities provide another rationale for why this study should be focused on the institution of KFOR, instead of the broader international security presence in Kosovo. During the course of the thesis it should become clear what kind of security tasks it is concerned with, which are more of a military nature than regular police work. However, that distinction is not always entirely clear cut. Division of responsibilities within the security sector is a topic of interest in itself, for instance illustrated by Espen Barth Eide's (2001) article on how to address the problems of dealing with inter-ethnic violence in the aftermath of the Kosovo War. Following the deployment of the EU mission EULEX after the declaration of independence, division of responsibilities between EU and NATO is another relevant topic, also with regard to the events of 2011. But strictly speaking it is not that relevant for the theoretical framework utilized here.

Firstly, the scope of the security tasks relevant for this thesis is to a certain extent given by the tasks KFOR performs. All that is necessary is that we accept that KFOR has a role to play in handling some of the major security concerns of the Kosovar population. Theoretically, KFOR as the international military presence in Kosovo could be entirely replaced by an EU military mission, such as in Bosnia. That would inevitably to some extent alter the relation between the population of Kosovo and that presence, but it would not be an alteration that severely influences the central points of the analysis.

The duration dilemma may occur in the relation between the population of a host state and an international military presence responsible for security. A key aspect of this study is to address the concept of the Kosovar population. The dispute over territorial integrity and the strong inter-ethnic tensions necessitate that we abandon a unitary concept of the populace in Kosovo, since the dilemma and affiliated factors should be understood differently in the separate ethnic groups. These clarifications will perhaps become even more distinct when the theoretical framework is presented in greater detail; therefore, this introductory chapter proceeds with such a presentation before discussing further the application of the framework on the case of KFOR and Kosovo.

## **1.2 The dilemmas of postwar statebuilding security**

The theoretical framework applied to the case of KFOR is developed in a chapter in the book *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding – Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations*, edited by Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (2009). David M. Edelstein is the author behind the chapter in question, which is titled *Foreign Militaries, Sustainable Institutions, and Postwar Statebuilding*. He discusses two dilemmas a foreign military presence might face during a postwar statebuilding operation, and factors affecting the susceptibility towards one of the dilemmas.

The two central dilemmas Edelstein identifies are the *Duration Dilemma* and the *Footprint Dilemma*. The first one describes how foreign militaries providing security can be welcomed at first, but as demands for independence and self-government increase can face pressure to withdraw before sufficient security institutions have been established in the area, something he identifies as an “obsolescing welcome”. The latter focuses on how intrusive and of what size the security presence should be, as a large footprint might be necessary to foster a secure environment, yet it might also create resistance towards the foreign military. It is important to find the balance between ensuring the security in a society marked by conflict and division, and avoiding resentment within the population. Basically, the footprint dilemma can also be a factor affecting the susceptibility towards the duration dilemma.

There are two other factors influencing how susceptible an international military will be to the duration dilemma. One aspect is if the population faces an external threat, or if the greatest threat to security comes from ethnic, religious and/or national divisions within. Edelstein



argues that in the latter, the foreign military presence more easily could be seen as biased, something which would increase the likelihood of problems with the duration dilemma. Another is whether or not the foreign military presence is considered an occupying force, or if it's part of a complex peacebuilding. The latter often has a UN mandate, and is less susceptible towards the duration dilemma

### **1.2.1 The dilemmas and factors in the case of Kosovo**

Edelstein uses the riots of 2004 in Kosovo as an example of the duration dilemma, yet he, as others (Lemay-Hébert 2009, Hehir 2010a), concludes that it was growing frustration with the UN administration, being increasingly viewed as an obstacle on the path towards sovereignty, which combined with other factors contributed to the outburst of violence. The policy implication he derives thereof is that decision makers must recognise the limitations of what military force can achieve contra a political solution. Albeit not an incorrect conclusion, some interesting questions immediately arise.

First of all, there is an important question concerning the level of analysis. The theoretical concepts are described from the perspective of an international military presence, yet the analytical conclusion seems to be from the perspective of the aggregated postwar statebuilding mission as a whole. Something which begs the question: would the analysis look different if it was conducted from the perspective of the international military presence? As mentioned previously, the idea for this study stems from this very question. It is the rationale behind applying the theoretical framework to the case of Kosovo and drawing the subsequent implications of the analysis explicitly from the perspective of KFOR.

Secondly, it can be argued that Edelstein's analysis is only valid for the Albanian segment of the population in Kosovo. Although the majority, the conflict in Kosovo would not really be equally complicated if the equation  $\text{Population of Kosovo} = \text{Kosovo Albanians}$  was correct. It is from this observation a central theme of the study emerges. Given the dispute over sovereignty and the ethnic tensions we cannot operate with a unitary understanding of the population in Kosovo in light of the factors Edelstein describes. The factors must be understood differently within the Serbian and the Albanian segments respectively. Contextually based, one may intuitively argue that although KFOR has a UN mandate, from the perspective of the Serbs they will to some extent be viewed as an occupying force

infringing upon the territorial integrity of Serbia, maybe best described as a necessary evil under the circumstances. Following the same line of contextual argumentation, for the Albanians, KFOR is part of an international statebuilding effort which is a step on the path towards formal independence. Given these assumptions, KFOR would be more likely to suffer from the duration dilemma among the Serbs than the Albanians. However, here it can be useful to make another observation; the duration dilemma is supposed to be a case of “obsolescing welcome”, but the existence of a welcome in the first place is a requirement the possibility of its obsolescence is conditioned upon. It would be to stretch reality a bit too far to claim that the Serbs in Kosovo welcomed the international intervention.

With regard to the threat environment, this factor should also be understood differently among the two ethnic groups. Firstly, one can argue that the Albanians consider the greatest threat to security to be represented by the security institutions of the government of Belgrade. This argument is also contextually based to some extent. There is a potential security threat from the inter-ethnic tensions within Kosovo, yet as the current *de facto* state, they have both their own and the international security institutions to address this issue. Given that Kosovo is a *de facto* state, the threat from Belgrade must be understood as a *de facto* external threat, a fact which in itself serves to minimise how much of a threat it is. This interpretation will be further supported by surveys from UNDP Kosovo, which show that the Albanian segment of the population in Kosovo is much less concerned with general public security than Serbs. Unsurprisingly, given this, for the Serbs it must be argued that the threat environment should be understood as one based on internal divisions and inter-ethnic violence, especially given the examples of violence against ethnic minorities which have occurred in the aftermath of the Kosovo War (Barth Eide 2001, Edelstein 2009).

Surveys from UNDP Kosovo are also used to operationalise the duration dilemma. Given how Edelstein defines the concept, an initial indicator of problems with the duration dilemma should be a marked decline in the levels of satisfaction with the institution. Merely identifying such a decline does not allow the analyst to conclude that a presence has encountered the duration dilemma; such a conclusion would require additional data. But the indicator can provide evidence of absence. If one cannot identify a highly noticeable decline in the level of satisfaction with an institution of postwar statebuilding, it appears very unlikely that it has faced the duration dilemma. Since the levels of satisfaction with KFOR have remained fairly

high among the Albanian population of Kosovo, one can only conclude that KFOR as a disaggregated security component of the postwar statebuilding mission so far still has not suffered problems with the duration dilemma. In the alternative analysis of the 2004 riots however, it is argued that the riots illustrate a political duration dilemma as a security threat KFOR had to deal with, and based on reports from International Crisis Group (2004) and Human Rights Watch (2004), the criticism of why KFOR was unable to deal with the riots sufficiently will be used to illustrate a possible example of problems with the footprint dilemma.

### **1.3 Statebuilding and security in the recognition game**

The aforementioned dispute over sovereignty can result in what Richard Fawn and Oliver P. Richmond (2009) identify as ethnic sovereignty in an article in the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*. Ethnic sovereignty is a concept wherein entities claim to be building a liberal peace through the development of liberal institutions domestically and seeking recognition of their pursuit of sovereignty internationally. Where these dynamics take place, a recognition game occurs. The problem Fawn and Oliver identify within the recognition game of entities with ethnic sovereignty (a type of *de facto* state, Kosovo being a case), is that they predominantly foster a vertical process of nurturing relations with external actors instead of a horizontal process fostering shared governance between local actors.

The dynamics of this recognition game are relevant for KFOR in two ways, one of them affecting an alternative dynamic to the duration dilemma consisting of a “generated welcome”, which will be labelled here as a *reversed duration dilemma* for the Serbian side of the recognition game. In this game, both the Serbs in Kosovo and the Serbian government of Belgrade are relevant actors. Their positions will be fairly similar, yet it is the government of Belgrade which holds a central card in its hand, namely formal recognition of Kosovo as an independent state. Its position can be expected to be influenced by the situation of the Serbs in Kosovo, but also other factors such as EU integration<sup>1</sup>.

The Albanian government of Pristina is engaged in a vertical process with many Western states and international organisations, yet the horizontal process barely exists. There is the

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<sup>1</sup> The impact of the EU-integration process on the developments in the relation between Belgrade, Pristina, and the international community is worthy of a thesis in itself, one that probably should be conducted at a later point in time to fully appreciate its impact.

fragile Belgrade-Pristina dialog, but both the Serbs in Kosovo and the government of Belgrade reject the authority of the Pristina government, and seek to undermine it. This aspect of the recognition game manifests itself in direct security threats KFOR may be forced to deal with, such as the tensions during the fall of 2011. Secondly, the Serbian only recognised the authority of KFOR, not the KSF. By demanding a prolonged KFOR presence, the authority of the KSF is undermined. However, this position should not be understood as merely mischievous moves aimed at undermining the authority of the KSF, but also valid concerns regarding the internal security threats for the Serbs in Kosovo, and a lack of faith in the KSF as a security provider for them, an example of problems with limited shared governance. These are the two sides of the reversed duration dilemma, wherein an international security presence originally not welcomed can be subject to a generated welcome in the recognition game.

#### **1.4 Research method**

This study of KFOR and Kosovo is a clear cut example of an in-depth case study of a single case,  $n=1$ , drawn from a broader population of cases. Defining the population is a key point, since this defines the boundaries of the phenomenon for which one may aspire to make the study relevant. The population of cases from which KFOR could be a case is probably best understood as international military presences responsible for the security component in postwar statebuilding missions in areas with unresolved conflicts over territorial integrity and strong inter-ethnic tensions.

The weakness of case studies with regard to external validity is well known (George & Bennett 2004, Gerring 2007). It's not possible to claim that my findings have general value beyond the case with any statistical certainty. When discussing the potential validity of the analysis beyond the case of KFOR, it is based on logical and theoretically based reasoning. In this thesis it is preferred to look at the issue for each analytical conclusion individually, since their potential value beyond Kosovo and KFOR must be based on the factors and dynamics upon which the conclusion is based. This argument leads on to the reasoning for why a case study is the obvious method of choice for the research question. We are looking at dilemmas based on complex dynamics and several factors. To properly study such phenomenon, an in-depth case study can be more useful than a large N quantitative study, since the most importance should be put on issues of internal and conceptual validity, and the ability to study

not just causal correlations, but also causal mechanisms. These issues are wherein the strengths of case study research may be found (ibid), and as such, it is the most logical and sound choice of method.

Former sections of this introduction have to a certain extent described the data material the study is based on. Surveys from UNDP Kosovo are used extensively, published in their *Kosovo Early Warning* series, dating back to 2002. Recently surveys have been published in the *Public Pulse* reports, as well as the *Mitrovica Public Opinion Surveys*. Beyond these surveys, reports from International Crisis Group and Human Rights Watch will be used, and additionally the *Internal Security Sector Review* (2006). Existing relevant academic works on Kosovo are also a useful source of information, the same goes for certain news articles.

It was considered doing interviews with respondents, but eventually concluded that interviews with single individuals could not generate data with justifiable high degrees of relevance and value for the analysis of this thesis in comparison with the amount of effort involved in the process. The only interviews used are secondary sources in which former officers in KFOR have been interviewed. It could have been interesting to actually conduct surveys with questions more specifically aimed at addressing the subject of research, but that would be an unrealistic aspiration, in particular given the scope of the thesis.

### **1.5 Disposition of the thesis**

After this introductory chapter, the thesis continues with a chapter containing conflict background and overview, wherein a contextual background of the conflict is provided, as well as more detailed discussions on the controversies regarding the Kosovo case and sovereignty, the evolution of the KFOR footprint and tasks. There are also more elaborate accounts of the most interesting “cases” within the case, the riots of 2004 and key developments following the declaration of independence.

The third chapter is an integrated chapter on the purpose of the study, the theoretical framework describing the concepts of postwar statebuilding, the international military security presence during such an endeavour, and the dilemmas and its associated factors. There is also a more detailed discussion regarding methodological issues, followed by a section introducing a comprehensive discussion on the operationalisation of the dilemmas and

factors in the Kosovo case. This section provides the data from the UNDP Kosovo surveys used in the subsequent analysis.

Chapter four is the main analytical chapter, providing the complete analysis which has been introduced in part during this first chapter, drawing upon the data and definitions of the previous chapters. It is also argued for the potential validity of my findings beyond this case.

In the fifth and final chapter the thesis is concluded with an analytical summary, before the chapter continues with a discussion on possible implications of the analytical findings of the thesis. Here it is argued for why the analytical conclusion of the reversed duration dilemma can be useful for understanding what potentially may be a key issue when addressing the political issue of the unresolved formal status of Kosovo, the need for an international military presence to provide credible security for the Serbs and other ethnic minorities. This argument is a complication of the central policy implication of Edelstein's work on the dilemmas; the recognition of the limits of military force contra a political solution. The main logic of the argument is that a formal political solution not necessarily will alleviate all security concerns, and that finding a political solution in itself can be very difficult unless basic security concerns are addressed. An implication of this is the possibility that international military force might be a requirement upon which a political solution can be conditioned, something which goes beyond Edelstein's argument that military force is a useful tool for aiding a political process.

## **2. Conflict background and overview**

This chapter is focused on both the developments following the establishment of the international security presence in Kosovo by UNSC resolution 1244, and the historical background for the conflict in Kosovo and the events precipitating the Kosovo war. These include the evolution of KFOR's footprint and KFOR's responsibilities, the ambiguity of the mandate in UNSCR1244, and the Kosovo declaration of independence in 2008. Special attention is directed towards the riots of 2004 and key events since the declaration of independence. However, the chapter begins with a discussion on the developments leading up to the establishment of KFOR, to the extent deemed necessary for understanding the conflict in Kosovo and the roles of the different parties to the conflict. The historical background of the conflict and NATO's role in the Kosovo war are obviously relevant factors in understanding the relation between the population of Kosovo and KFOR. A discussion on Kosovo and sovereignty is also included due to the importance of the territorial dispute for my analysis. Kosovo and sovereignty is a contentious issue for several reasons outlined below.

### **2.1 Historical context**

To understand the Kosovo conflict properly we first and foremost need to understand the role of Kosovo in the Serbian national identity. That role is seeded deep in the history of the Balkans, and dates back to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, where the Ottoman Empire defeated the Serbian forces. As such, Kosovo plays a major symbolic role in the image of the Orthodox Serbian nation as a lone defender against the expanding invasion of the Muslim Ottoman Empire. The relevance of Kosovo's place in the history of the Serbian nation to the conflict over Kosovo (and in a broader sense, that in the former Yugoslavia) is illustrated by Milosevic's famous speech of 1987, where he invoked the myth of Kosovo and pledged to protect the Serbs of Kosovo. (Economides 2007, p: 218-220). At the heart of the conflict over Kosovo lies the point that Kosovo was a part of Serbia and Yugoslavia since its establishment after the First World War (with the exception of WWII), as a province and not a republic, yet the majority of the population is, and has been, Albanian during the same period. There was resistance towards the Serbian rule among the Albanian population of Kosovo throughout the period, a resistance whose influence grew after the death of Tito (ibid, 220).

### **2.1.1 Developments from 1989 until the Kosovo war**

In 1989, the autonomous status of the Kosovo province was repealed by Belgrade, an action to which the Assembly of Kosovo responded with a declaration of independence for Kosovo. It can be argued that the beginning of the 'current' Kosovo conflict lies here, yet it is important to remember that Kosovo remained largely peaceful until 1995, while large parts of the Balkans were ravaged by violent conflict. (Hehir 2010, p: 6).

During the 1980s and 90s, Kosovo was widely perceived internationally as a potential disaster, yet it received very limited attention within the international community. A referendum held in 1991 revealed a strong support for Kosovo independence among the population. Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and unofficially elected president of Kosovo, led a passive resistance towards Serbian rule through the establishment of a 'shadow state'. Rugova and his passive stream of opposition received relatively minor support from the international community. Domestic support in Kosovo gradually diminished as his hope that independence for Kosovo would follow in the wake of the conflicts in other parts of Yugoslavia failed to materialise. The other stream of Albanian resistance towards Serbian rule in Kosovo was represented by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which challenged Rugova and LDK, advocating a more aggressive and violent approach. But it was not until after the Dayton Accords of 1995 that the approach of the KLA began to dominate the more passive approach of Rugova and the LDK. Gradually the Albanian opposition towards Serbian rule of Kosovo became radicalised (Economides 2007, p: 220-222, Hehir 2010, p: 5-6).

As the KLA increased their attacks on both Serbian police and military presence in Kosovo, and Serbian civilians, the response of the Milosevic government became even stronger. The strategy of the KLA was working, as support domestically and internationally was strengthened by the excessive countermeasures they were able to provoke from the government in Belgrade. NATO and the West struggled with their credibility as the conflict continued and escalated, particularly since the US had issued a threat of military intervention towards Serbia in the case of conflict in Kosovo as early as 1992. An agreement concerning the withdrawal from Kosovo of recently deployed Serbian special police, an observer corps from the OSCE, and continued negotiations between Belgrade and the Kosovo Albanian leadership, was reached in October of 1998 (Economides 2007, p: 222-225, Hehir 2010, p: 6-



7). The agreement of 1998 did not last, predominantly because the KLA did not comply with the agreement. For the KLA, complying with an agreement facilitating further negotiations between Rugova and Belgrade seemed futile, as they believed it could only lead to limited autonomy and not independence for Kosovo. Furthermore, the KLA believed that the involvement of the West and the pressure they put on Milosevic could be seen as implicit support for their cause, whereas Milosevic believed the West would not forcefully support the KLA due to both the labelling of the KLA as a terrorist organisation by the West, and the previously mentioned struggles with credibility. A vicious cycle of retaliatory violence emerged, which eventually changed the international approach drastically after the Racak massacre on January the 15<sup>th</sup>, 1999.

Negotiations at Rambouillet was called for by the Contact Group (the US, the UK, Russia, France, Germany and Italy), however the possible scope of agreement was limited by disagreement within the Contact Group. The hope was that they could literally force the parties to an agreement, an approach well illustrated by the fact that NATO threatened with the use of force against parties that did not attend or were deemed to have caused the negotiations to fail, a threat which has been described as reminiscent of pre-UN era Great Power diplomacy (Economides 2007, p: 226-227, Hehir 2010, p: 7).

The negotiations at Rambouillet failed, with the Kosovo Albanian leadership reluctantly signing the proposed agreement and the government of Milosevic rejecting it. There are several reasons for this failure, such as the above mentioned lack of agreement within the Contact Group, the composition and lack of agreement within the Kosovo Albanian delegation, and the unacceptable nature of the final proposal for the Belgrade government. (Economides 2007, p: 227.228, Hehir 2010, p: 7-8). In the conceptual language of international negotiations theories, the parties' minimum acceptable outcome, or BATNA's (Hopmann 1996, p: 53-68), meant the bargaining space was practically non-existent, if there were any overlap between acceptable agreements for both at all.

### **2.1.2 The Kosovo War**

The failure at Rambouillet contributed to NATO's bombing campaign against the FRY, which commenced on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 1999. Direct threats from Richard Holbrooke towards Milosevic could not force Belgrade to sign an agreement, leading NATO to initiate OAF,

calling it a humanitarian intervention even though it occurred without a mandate from the UNSC. The hope was that the military campaign would force Milosevic to make concessions quickly; however, those envisioned concessions were not made as soon as hoped. Initially NATO only attacked military targets within Kosovo. The offensive operations of FRY in Kosovo continued with increased strength despite the attacks, causing a large displacement of Kosovo Albanians. NATO's bombardment was eventually also directed towards targets in Serbia, and both military and civilian infrastructure were significantly damaged, yet the FRY campaign in Kosovo did not stop until the Military Technical Agreement was signed on June 10, 78 days after OAF was initiated. The agreement reached in Kumanovo was more favourable towards FRY than the one proposed at Rambouillet. Some of the most controversial parts had been removed, and the territorial integrity of FRY was recognised. In other words, Belgrade's jurisdiction over Kosovo was recognised, and the sovereignty of FRY was re-invoked after the NATO intervention. The forces of FRY had to withdraw from Kosovo, being replaced by an international military presence under UN auspices (Economides 2007, p: 229, 239, Hehir 2010, p: 8-9). Kosovo became an international protectorate.

## **2.2 Kosovo and sovereignty**

With regard to the concept of sovereignty, Kosovo represent an interesting case for several reasons. It has already been noted that OAF was initiated without a mandate from the UNSC, something which places Kosovo right in the middle of the conflict between the *rule of non-intervention* and *sovereignty as a right*, with an increased emphasis devoted to human rights and humanitarianism (Lang 2009), later formalised in the R2P principle.

The issue of final status is another aspect wherein Kosovo represents a highly interesting and somewhat controversial case. The Ahtisaari Proposal failed to achieve the UN endorsement the intervening powers hoped for, and as such failed to replace UNSCR1244, which is still the resolution mandating the international presence in Kosovo (Gow 2009). This eventually led to a unilateral declaration of independence on February 17, 2008, a declaration to which the international community's reaction most accurately can be described as sharply divided. Most Western countries and countries traditionally aligned with the West quickly recognised the Republic of Kosovo; however, not all members of neither EU nor NATO has recognised Kosovo as an independent state. The recognition of Kosovo did not proceed as rapidly as the Kosovo Albanians and those aligned with their position had hoped for, and still less than half

the Member States of the UN have recognised Kosovo. For proponents of an independent Kosovo, the issue is a case of the right to self determination for the Albanian majority of Kosovo. Furthermore, it is argued that independence for Kosovo must be seen in the broader context of the Yugoslavian break up (a position rejected by Serbia since Kosovo never was a republic). There is also a moral dimension to the argument, in that independence can be seen as compensation for the Serbian oppression which peaked during the conflict of 1998-99 (Ker-Lindsay 2010).

Countries deciding not to recognise Kosovo do so for various reasons. For Serbia and close allies such as Russia, it is predominantly a case of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia in accordance with the UN Charter, that Kosovo is formally still a part of Serbia, a position strengthened further by the importance of Kosovo in the Serb national identity. Their position is that independence for Kosovo may only be achieved with Serbian consent. With its veto power in the UNSC, Russia can effectively prevent UN membership for Kosovo. This point can serve as the segue to another important argument for several countries that haven't recognised Kosovo yet, namely respect for UN authority. Until another resolution takes it place, UNSCR 1244 is still binding for UN members, and it recognises Kosovo as part of Serbia. Furthermore, Russia is entitled to block UN membership for Kosovo, and these two factors combined make several countries hesitant to recognise Kosovo until its independence can be recognised through the UN. NATO intervening without a UN mandate is perhaps considered sufficient subversion of UN authority for the time being. Another central argument is the fear of how recognition of Kosovo could set a precedent for unilateral declarations of independence elsewhere, in particular relevant for countries which have their own problems with groups working towards political separatism (ibid).

The Kosovo precedent is an interesting issue in itself, given how the strongest proponents of independence for Kosovo, such as the government in Pristina and the US, argue that it will not be a precedent, that Kosovo is a *sui generis* case with no precedential qualities (Hehir 2010b, Gow 2009). This argument has been dismissed by some commentators as merely wishful thinking (Gow 2009). The International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion of 2010 concluded that the Kosovo declaration of independence is legal, since "international law contains no applicable prohibition of declaration of independence" (Reuters 2010). This leaves a political decision of whether or not to recognise such a declaration. As British

historian Timothy Garton Ash (2008) rather precisely formulated it; “Calling it a ‘special case’ won’t stop others from trying to follow in its independence example [...] Kosovo is unique, and there will be more Kosovos”. The argument is perhaps best illustrated by the Russian recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and the war in Georgia of 2008, events which in a political sense must be seen towards the backdrop of other countries’ recognition of the independence of Kosovo (Gow 2009). Furthermore, the Bosnian Serbs of Republika Srpska have threatened with attempted secession from Bosnia over Kosovo’s independence (Dalje 2008).

## **2.3 KFOR**

The mandate of KFOR stems from UNSCR1244, which endorsed the MTA and called for an international military presence in Kosovo under UN auspices. Although under UN auspices, KFOR is essentially a NATO force. The first part of this section will present the evolution of KFOR’s mandate and footprint, before more detailed accounts of the resurgence of violence in March 2004 and key security challenges KFOR had to address in 2008 and 2011 follows.

### **2.3.1 Mandate and footprint**

KFOR deployed on the June 12, 1999, two days after the air campaign was suspended through the signing of the MTA, and the adoption of UNSCR1244. It is operating under Chapter VII of the UN Charter as a peace enforcing, alternatively peace supporting, operation. KFOR consisted of approximately 50 000 troops initially. The original mandate consisted of the following points (NATO 2011):

- Deter renewed hostility and threats against Kosovo by Yugoslav and Serb forces;
- Establish a secure environment and ensure public safety and order;
- Demilitarise the KLA;
- Support the international humanitarian effort; and
- Coordinate with and support the international civilian presence

In addition to the provision of security as an enabler of postwar statebuilding, support tasks KFOR has been performing include assistance with the return or relocation of refugees and displaced persons. Security tasks have included security and public order and various contributions towards arms control and disarmament. Furthermore, protection of minority

groups is an issue which KFOR explicitly state is receiving special attention, and in connection with that, the protection of heritage sites such as monasteries.

The KFOR footprint was decreased from the initial 50 000 to 39 000 by the beginning of 2002, a decrease which continued the following couple of years. By mid 2003 the number of KFOR troops was 26 000, and by the end of the year the footprint was decreased to 17 500. These reductions in the number of KFOR troops were attributed to the improved security situation of Kosovo, something which changed drastically in March 2004, when inter-ethnic violence between Albanians and Serbs re-emerged on a higher level. KFOR also became a target for the violent attacks, and an additional 2500 troops were deployed to assist the existing KFOR presence (ibid).

The actual security statebuilding aspect of the KFOR operation did not come into full force until after the Kosovo declaration of independence of February 17, 2008. Prior to this, KFOR had supported the establishment of civilian institutions. Now however, KFOR was assigned new tasks in Kosovo, which more easily can be placed directly within the concept of statebuilding. Firstly, it is important to note how the inherent ambiguity of the international presence in Kosovo comes to the surface with the declaration of independence. The mandates of KFOR and the civilian UN presence are derived from a resolution recognising the territorial integrity of FRY, or in other words, Kosovo as part of Serbia, yet simultaneously they contribute to the establishment and building of independent institutions in Kosovo. NATO foreign ministers agreed in December 2007 that KFOR would remain in Kosovo based on UNSCR1244 until the UNSC decides otherwise. This commitment was reaffirmed in December 2008 (ibid).

KFOR began the implementation of its new statebuilding tasks on June 12, 2008. They consist of the stand-down of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) and the establishment of the KSF. KPC was a transitional postwar emergency response force under the authority of UNMIK, and was in part a continuation of the KLA, which formally disbanded in 1999 (ICG 2006, p: 12-13). Its activities were seized on the January 20, 2009, and KPC formally dissolved on June 14 the same year (ibid).

The intention was to replace the KPC with the KSF, the latter being developed in parallel with the stand-down of the KPC. The KSF is intended to ensure that the emergency response capabilities of the KPC remain in Kosovo. Recruitment to the KSF commenced in January 2009, and the first operational capability was established in September of the same year, with a force of approximately 1500. It is supposed to be a multi-ethnic, lightly armed, professional volunteer based force trained according to NATO standards, with a force consisting of no more than 2500 active troops and 800 reserves. Full operational capability has not been reached yet, but is expected in the time period of 2012-2013. The responsibilities of the KSF include security tasks not appropriate for the police and participation in crisis response operations and peace support operations (ibid).

KFOR is responsible for supervising and supporting the establishment of KSF, and in addition providing support to the NATO advisory team tasked with the establishment of a civilian body supervising the KSF. NATO has, and still is, assisting the government of Pristina with the Ministry of the KSF; the body assigned the aforementioned civilian control over the KSF (ibid).

Attributed to the further improvement of the security situation in Kosovo, NATO defence ministers on June 11-12 of 2009 decided to gradually decrease the KFOR footprint to a deterrence presence. This involves a reduction in the number of troops and a greater focus on intelligence and flexibility. The transition is on-going, with the accomplishment of Gate 1 in the transition being announced to NATO defence ministers on February 3-4, 2010. Gate 1 involved a reduction in the number of KFOR troops to 10 200. The continuation of the transition to Gate 2 was decided by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on October 29, 2010. KFOR announced it had reached the reduction of troops outlined in Gate 2 on February 28, 2011, taking the number of KFOR troops to approximately 5000 (ibid).

## **2.4 The civil disorder of March 2004**

The violence that occurred in Mid-March of 2004 caught many by surprise, both internationally and within Kosovo. That being said, it would be highly inaccurate to describe the events as random violence which occurred out of nowhere. There was a gradual increase in the frustration towards the international presence, UNMIK in particular, within the Kosovo Albanian community in the months leading up to the outbreak of violence on March 17. The

frustration originated from little progress being achieved on the issue of the final status for Kosovo, concerns over parallel institutions being developed in Serbian parts of Kosovo, and a feeling among the Albanians that the Serbs were receiving privileged treatment from the international presence. At the same time, one could also see a gradual development towards more widespread violent extremism, and there were several attacks and killings targeting Kosovo Serbs (ICG 2004, p: 10-13, HRW 2004, p: 15-16).

On March 15, an 18-year old Kosovo Serb boy was shot and seriously wounded in the village of Caglavica, allegedly by Albanians. The Serbs reacted angrily, considering it yet another example of violent extremist attacks that neither KFOR nor UNMIK was able to sufficiently deal with. Their response was to block the roads between Pristina-Skopje and Pristina-Gnjilane, efficiently cutting off an important economic lifeline, and cutting Pristina off from the south of Kosovo. Both Albanians and KFOR troops came under attack from the Serbs, causing Albanian frustration towards the international community for a lack of ability and/or will to deal with the blockade (ICG 2004, p: 13-14, HRW 2004, p: 16-17).

Demonstrations against arrests of former KLA leaders were already planned all over Kosovo for March 16. Both speakers and crowds suggested a possible violent uprising against UNMIK during the demonstrations. Simultaneously, reports surfaced in the Kosovo Albanian media about an incident where Serbs allegedly had chased a group of four young Albanian boys into the Ibar River, with only one of them avoiding death by drowning. Although the surviving boy never claimed it directly, Albanian media reported unequivocally that Serbs had caused the deaths of the three boys by chasing them into the river. The OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media strongly criticised the Albanian media outlets for publishing inflammatory reports based on unconfirmed stories. Subsequent investigations have cast doubts on the accusations. In the context of the escalating tensions over the previous days, the reports on the drowning were the final drop that caused the outbreak of violent protests on the March 17, 2004 (ICG 2004, p: 14, HRW 2004, p: 19-20)

Widespread violent protest occurred in Kosovo during March 17 and 18, with UNMIK reporting over 33 different major riots involving more than 50 000 protesters. Strong accusations have been made towards the organised nature of parts of the protests. Among the rioters there was a more unorganised element of angry, directionless mobs, whereas some

groups were armed, well organised, and determined in their attacks. Those attacks have been described as at least amounting towards ethnic cleansing in its targeting on non-Albanian minorities within Kosovo. In the end, the violent riots of March 2004 caused the death of 19 persons, with almost 1000 wounded and more than 4000 persons displaced, 550 homes and 27 orthodox buildings burned, in addition to another 182 homes and two churches/monasteries being seriously damaged. UNMIK, KFOR, the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), and other institutions responsible for security received severe criticism over their inability to protect the minorities of Kosovo (ICG 2004, HRW 2004, Hehir 2010).

## **2.5 The civil disorder of March 2008**

The inability to resolve the issue of final status for Kosovo led to the unilateral declaration of independence in February of 2008, inevitably creating resistance among the Serb population of Kosovo, in particular among Serbs in Northern Kosovo. 150 Kosovo Serb police officers were suspended due to refusal of the authority of the government in Pristina. In the divided town of Mitrovica, hundreds of Serb protesters broke into and occupied a UN courthouse in the northern part of town. Initially UN police did not intervene, and attempts were made to resolve the issue through negotiations (BBC 2008a).

On March 17, UN police and KFOR troops surrounded the seized courthouse. The UN police came under attack from Serb protesters opposing the action as they stormed the premises during a pre-dawn raid to reassume control and arrest the occupying Serbs. The resulting riot was the worst violent clash since the declaration of independence, resulting in more than 100 injured civilians and security officials, and one dead UN police officer (AFP 2008, BBC 2008b). The KFOR peacekeepers present intervened to gain control over the situation, and eventually had to assumed control over Mitrovica, due to UNMIK and the KPS being forced to withdraw from the town (ibid). UNMIK and the KPS returned to Mitrovica a couple of days later, allowing for the relief of KFOR troops which had assumed responsibility for the police station and the courthouses in the Serb-dominated northern part of Mitrovica (B92 2008).

## **2.6 The escalating tensions of 2011**

Recent tensions in North Kosovo began in the last part of July 2011. The government of Pristina attempted to exercise full control over border crossing points on the border with



Serbia through the deployment of police special forces at two specific border points on July 25. The attempt must be deemed a failure, as Serb roadblocks prevented the one team from reaching Gate 31 at Brnjak, whereas another team was able to briefly hold Gate 1 at Jarinje; however, they were forced to retreat the following day, with one Albanian officer being killed and the border post being blown up (ICG 2011b, 2012).

KFOR troops had to move in and assume control over the border crossing, declaring it a militarised zone, closing the crossing for all commercial traffic (ICG 2012). KFOR also began closing down unofficial routes used by the Serbs in North Kosovo to smuggle goods from Serbia (ICG 2011b). An interim agreement reached between KFOR command and a Serbian negotiator ended on September 16, prompting EULEX to airlift Kosovo border officials to the crossing points thereafter, something which they had refused to do during the summer (ICG 2012).

The Serbs of North Kosovo proceeded with establishing several roadblocks and organising “sit-ins”, preventing KFOR and EULEX from moving freely and deploying further Kosovo officials. Attempts by KFOR to remove roadblocks have resulted in violent clashes, most notably on the September 26 and 27 near Gate 1 at Jarinje, and again on two occasions during late November (ibid).

On the first occasion, KFOR removed a roadblock, only to see the Serbs erecting a new one a couple of hundred metres further away. The following day they clashed with a Serb crowd numbering over a 1000, resulting in several injuries on both sides. Attempts to remove roadblocks at Dudin Krs and Jagnjenica also resulted in violent clashes among KFOR and Serb protesters, causing numerous injuries (ibid). There have also been sporadic clashes in between the events mentioned specifically in this section, and relations still remain tense during the first half of 2012.



### **3. Purpose, Theory & Research Method**

In this chapter, the reader can find a more detailed discussion on the purpose of the study, and how it was developed. It subsequently proceeds with a presentation of the relevant theoretical concepts, those being human centric security, the security component of a postwar statebuilding mission, and lastly the duration dilemma and its associated factors, which are the analytical tools applied to the case of KFOR and Kosovo. Following the theoretical section there is a discussion on the method of case study research, focusing on its weaknesses and strengths. Based on the purpose of the study and the strengths of case study research, it is argued that case study research represents the only viable choice of research method for studying the subject of this analysis. The section on research method is concluded by the operationalisation of the duration dilemma and its associated factors, as defined by Edelstein, in the case of KFOR and Kosovo.

#### **3.1 Purpose of study**

In its most basic form, the idea of this study stems from a strong interest in the conflicts of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, peacekeeping/enforcement and international interventionism in general, and the role of NATO in the post-Cold War world. The case of Kosovo represents a merger of these separate interests, or in other words, Kosovo is a case where they cannot easily be considered separate. Given the particular interest in NATO's changing role in the world, it fell naturally to focus the study on the efforts of KFOR in the international postwar statebuilding mission.

##### **3.1.1 Scope of research**

From early on in the process the necessity of limiting the scope of research was given a high priority. An immediate limitation made was the decision not to focus on the whole role of NATO in Kosovo. The Kosovo War will not be discussed comprehensively, albeit both highly interesting and having an obvious impact on the following postwar mission, as the legitimacy and conduct of the war already have been discussed extensively and would merit an entire thesis in itself. It was conscientiously decided that the focus would be on the KFOR mission and the role of NATO after they had been tasked with the main responsibility of providing a secure environment in Kosovo.

Although what the subject of research should be was well understood in broader terms, a more wholesome idea of the study's format required addressing the issue of which analytical framework that would be applied. At this point the possibility of doing a comparative study was still under consideration, for instance through research on the postwar security missions in both Kosovo and Bosnia; however, as the research design of the thesis was developed further it quickly became obvious that the study would focus on the impact of specific circumstances in the Kosovo case, which separated it from the case of Bosnia and many other postwar security operations, hence the notion of a comparative study was abandoned. On the continuum of generalising/particularising (Gerring 2007, p: 76-80), the study was moved towards the particularising point.

### **3.1.2 The choice of theoretical framework**

To address the research question presented in the introductory chapter it is essential to conceptualise KFOR clearly, and then operationalise relevant concepts in the case of Kosovo, something which is discussed more both later and in the subsequent chapter. More precisely, what this study does is to analyse how we should understand the duration dilemma and its associated factors under the specific circumstances of the Kosovo case, and how the unresolved nature of the sovereignty conflict impacts the performance of KFOR's responsibilities. The rationale behind applying this specific analytical framework to the Kosovo case is discussed in this section, or in other words, what created the belief there was something to gain by doing a more in-depth study of the duration dilemma in this particular case. The framework itself is detailed more comprehensively afterwards.

Attention was devoted to the book on dilemmas of postwar statebuilding edited by Paris & Sisk while searching for an appropriate analytical perspective, and therein a highly appealing chapter on dilemmas an international military presence face was discovered. Its appeal was diverse. For one thing, the concept of studying dilemmas and the factors affecting their relevance fed an appetite for complexity, and any study focusing on Kosovo should appreciate a certain amount of complexity in its approach. More importantly, the theoretical framework Edelstein outlined appeared highly applicable to the case of Kosovo, illustrated by the fact that Kosovo is used as an illustration in the description of the duration dilemma. Furthermore, prior knowledge of the Kosovo case led to the question of whether or not Edelstein's illustrative analysis was comprehensive enough to use his own framework to full effect.

Firstly, it was felt that Edelstein's chapter lacked some clarity as to the level of analysis. The concepts outline focused primarily on an international military presence and the dilemmas they face, whereas his analysis occasionally seemed to occur on the level of the aggregate postwar statebuilding mission as a whole. This is perhaps illustrated best by what he defines as the most important policy implication of his analysis of the dilemmas, namely that:

*"...intervening powers must recognize the limits to what military force can achieve in the context of a statebuilding mission. Military force can be an important tool that aids in the process of finding a political solution, but ultimately it is only the political solution itself that can resolve the dilemmas described in this chapter" (Edelstein 2009, p: 101)*

The validity of the above statement is not questioned in general terms, but given that it is derived directly from his analysis of the riots of 2004 in Kosovo it can lead one to ask if the analytical conclusion and policy implications of it would differ if the analysis was conducted explicitly from the disaggregated perspective of the international military presence, KFOR. Continuing that train of thought it appeared questionable if Kosovo was the best example to derive such a conclusion from, and in addition to a suspicion that Edelstein's self-described most important policy implication did not necessarily provide the most useful insights from the perspective of the military presence.

First of all, one may wonder if it will be considered illuminating knowledge by military officers with a basic Clausewitzian understanding of military force as a political tool. But more importantly, since the concepts Edelstein describes are very clearly defined as relevant for an international military presence, and so are several of his conclusions and policy implications, the most natural perspective to conclude an analysis from would be that of the international military presence.

It appears as if Edelstein attempts to make his analysis broadly relevant (and his findings are both highly interesting and relevant and should probably be reiterated to decision-makers as often as possible). But the aspirations for a general value also lead the analysis to be somewhat superficial, in addition to the lack of clarity on the issue of analytical level. A key criticism that can be made is that his analysis is only truly valid for the Albanian segment of

the Kosovar population. This is another aspect which triggered the desire for a more comprehensive study of the case of KFOR. Edelstein's illustrative analysis of the 2004 riots in Kosovo did not grasp the complexity of the population in Kosovo. It seems to only focus on the approach of the Albanian population in Kosovo towards the international statebuilding mission, and is as such in a sense neglecting key issues that make the efforts in Kosovo challenging. Furthermore, as it is a theoretical framework on international military presences, the analysis fails to address the issue of how that presence failed to both predict and address the threat to security which occurred during the riots.

### **3.1.3 Theoretical ambitions of the study**

In this thesis it is generally attempted to make the analytical conclusions and possible policy implications directly applicable to the mission of the international military presence, not the postwar statebuilding mission in broader terms. Both levels are undoubtedly important and relevant, yet a central belief here is that the KFOR case has some special traits meriting a more in-depth study. By applying the theoretical framework of Edelstein to the Kosovo case and being more vigorously conscientious regarding the level of analysis and the particular qualities of the case, the ambition of the analysis is to reach more profound analytical conclusions on the case of KFOR and Kosovo than those present in Edelstein's chapter.

The approach in this thesis can most accurately be described as applying a theoretical framework to a case with the purpose of further developing our theoretical understanding. The aspiration is to use the Kosovo case and its specifics to shed further light on the dynamics of the duration dilemma and associated factors in the relation between the population of Kosovo and KFOR, believing that those specifics require an alternative understanding of the duration dilemma to that which can be found in the original work developing the theoretical framework. Instead of describing it as either "hypothesis generating" or "hypothesis testing", it may be considered more precise to describe the purpose as being the continued development of an existing theoretical framework, enhancing our understanding of the relevant concepts under specific conditions.

## **3.2 Theoretical framework**

There is a vast array of concepts within this field of study. One can speak of military intervention, humanitarian intervention, peace operations, counterinsurgency and so forth, all

more or less related to each other. There is a strong element of conceptual overlap, and the boundaries are not clearly defined. They can be approached from different angles, and some are sub-components of others (Larsdotter 2011, 6-13). Whether or not to use a broader or a more limited concept is naturally dependent on what type of analysis the researcher is aiming for. Within the UN framework there is often a distinction between peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding. There are also conceptual nuances which could justify a more elaborate discussion, but they do not receive further attention here. As indicated in previous sections of this thesis, the study is placed within the concepts of postwar statebuilding. More specifically, the analysis is conducted within the theoretical framework of postwar statebuilding security.

This section begins by discussing the concept of security in postwar statebuilding as applied to the KFOR and Kosovo case. It proceeds to discuss the main theoretical concept of concern in the analysis, the duration dilemma and the factors affecting susceptibility towards it for a given military presence, namely the footprint dilemma, the type of intervention, and the threat environment. The operationalisation of the dilemma and the factors in the analysis, including the provision of tables with the results from the UNDP Kosovo surveys being used, can be found in the final section of the chapter.

### **3.2.1 The applied security concept**

There are several different understandings of the security concept; it is therefore necessary to explicitly define how security should be understood within the frame of this thesis. From the former sections it should be quite obvious for the reader that we are not speaking of security in the sense of national security, or any other form of security conceptualised with states as the units of analysis. The focus of the thesis is on the provision of security to a population by an international military presence, and the establishment and strengthening of national security institutions with the purpose of assuming that responsibility from the international military presence, specifically focusing on a possible dilemma and connected challenges found in the relation between the population and the foreign military presence. In other words, it is the security of the people which is relevant, and as such the concept of security in this thesis falls within the concept of human security.

### **3.2.1.1 Human security**

As discussed by Kerr (2010, 128-131), the concepts of human-centric security and state-centric security should perhaps be understood as complementary rather than competing, and she argues that they are both necessary concepts, and that both are insufficient. Though both are needed, Kerr points out that a lot of work remains to provide a satisfactory consolidation of the two concepts. It is not attempted to make any contributions to such a consolidating process, and it should not be a source of great controversy to claim that a human-centric approach is the most sensible within the framework of postwar statebuilding. That being said, there can be several definitions of human security as well, most easily described as either narrow or broad (ibid, 124-127). In summary, the narrow definition of human security refers to political violence, such as state-sponsored violence and violence among social groups, and that human security refers to the protection of individuals and communities from such violence. The broad school of human security emphasises threats beyond that of direct violence, and that human security should also include threats towards human development. This is illustrated well by all the elements included in the report on Kosovo (2006) from the ISSR Kosovo.

There are also variations as to how broad the broader understanding of human security should be, and it has received criticism on the grounds of encompassing so many potential causal hypotheses that it is rendered useless for the formulation of research and policy frameworks. Kerr argues that the narrow and broader definitions not necessarily have to be competing, but that the broader definition of human security also can be understood as providing the causes of the political violence in the narrower concept, or in other words, that the narrow school refers to crisis management, whereas the broad school refers to prevention.

### **3.2.2 Security in postwar statebuilding**

Kerr's understanding of a possible complimentary relation, wherein the causal dynamic between the two schools is described as potentially circular, is to a great extent agreed upon here. This capsules what is defined in this thesis as the duality of the security component in the postwar statebuilding concept perfectly, and is a useful tool for achieving some conceptual clarity in this initially somewhat fuzzy concept.



Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (2009, 14-15) define postwar statebuilding as a sub-component of peacebuilding. Whereas postwar peacebuilding refers to the establishment of conditions preventing the reoccurrence of violence more broadly, postwar statebuilding is concerned with the construction and strengthening of legitimate governmental institutions. They also stress that while statebuilding and nation-building are related, the two concepts are far from similar; nation-building emphasises the development of a national identity, statebuilding the formal institutions of the state. As indicated above, postwar statebuilding refers to the strengthening and/or construction of legitimate government institutions. However, when within the realms of postwar statebuilding security, the conceptual fuzziness emerges. The most obvious statebuilding aspect of a postwar statebuilding security mission from a theoretical standpoint must be the development and training of independent security institutions. Legitimate security institutions are essential to avoid a prolonged dependency of an international security presence. From a statebuilding perspective, the strengthening and/or construction of legitimate security institutions that security responsibilities can be transferred to represent the only viable exit strategy.

However, until the point where such a transition of responsibility can occur, the most prominent security concern in the postwar statebuilding operation is the establishment of a secure environment. A great part of the empirical material from the Kosovo case will be concerned with this aspect of the security mission. But it should be rather obvious from the conceptual definition of statebuilding that the establishment of a secure environment is not really statebuilding *per se*. There are not any elements of developing governmental institutions directly. Rather, it is much easier to draw parallels to concepts such as peace operations and peacekeeping when discussing the establishment of a secure environment. To use the concepts of human security, the provision of narrow human security may refer to the establishment of a secure environment, whereas the provision of broader human security may refer to statebuilding. Without achieving the latter, the first aspect can only be an interim accomplishment; however, the dynamic is circular. As David M. Edelstein (2009, 82) quite rightly points out, a secure environment cannot be a substitute for political and civilian development in the long run. However, security and stability can be deemed necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for the success of the civilian and political efforts in the statebuilding process.

In a sense we find ourselves back where this chapter started, recognising that the conceptual nuances and inevitable overlap make the usefulness of rigid conceptual boundaries limited. The focus here is on the role of KFOR and NATO in Kosovo as an institution. Responsibilities include both the provision of a secure environment and statebuilding through the establishment and development of KSF, and therein lay the duality of postwar statebuilding security. Arguably then, postwar statebuilding is perhaps not a utopian or ideal framework to place the analysis within, yet it is from that very framework the analytical tools are drawn; the dilemmas and their factors. Given how intertwined the circular dynamic is in this case, and the fact that an element in the analysis is how challenges in the statebuilding process can create a need for crisis management, the decision to place this analysis within the framework of postwar statebuilding should be justified.

Another required conceptual clarification previously alluded to is the fact that the focus is directed towards an institution, not the security sector as a whole. Works analysing the security sector necessarily have to study several institutions, such as military, police, the justice system etc. (Bono 2010, Internal Security Sector Review 2006). Division of responsibilities within the security sector is a topic of study in itself, as illustrated by Espen Barth Eide's (2001) discussion on how the problems with public security for ethnic minorities in Kosovo in the aftermath of the war should be addressed, wherein he argued for a transfer of responsibilities more traditionally associated with the police to KFOR. Albeit a highly interesting topic, division of responsibilities is not one to which great attention is devoted here, partly because it quite simply goes beyond the scope of the thesis; more importantly, it is not conceptually necessary. Theoretically, KFOR could be entirely replaced by for instance a military EU presence, such as in Bosnia. From a statebuilding perspective, KFOR should ideally be replaced by an autonomous institution in Kosovo. As KFOR decreases and alters its footprint, division of responsibilities may change. The aim here is to explain how the dispute over sovereignty, the recognition game, and the inter-ethnic tensions effect how we should understand the duration dilemma and the challenges it creates for the military presence. If KFOR is removed, those challenges would still be there for someone else to deal with. The possible future relevance of an international military presence is discussed in greater detail in the possible implication section later in the thesis.

### **3.2.3 The dilemma of postwar statebuilding security**

In the book on postwar statebuilding dilemmas edited by Paris and Sisk, David M. Edelstein contributes with a chapter entitled *Foreign militaries, sustainable institutions, and postwar statebuilding* (2009). His main focus is directed towards two dilemmas facing international militaries responsible for the security aspect of postwar statebuilding operations. They are defined as the *duration dilemma* and the *footprint dilemma*. In the following section the dilemmas are presented as discussed by Edelstein in his chapter, including the different factors that influence their relevance for a particular postwar statebuilding security operation. As indicated in the introduction, the duration dilemma is the starting point of the thesis's analysis, and the ambition is to use the KFOR case to further develop our understanding of the dilemma and the factors affecting susceptibility towards it. The concept is discussed more comprehensively in the following section.

#### **3.2.3.1 The duration dilemma**

The essence of the duration dilemma is that although intervening military forces might be initially welcomed, over time populations can grow impatient and start resisting the continued foreign military presence. If the resistance grows strong enough, there will be pressure towards the international presence for a transfer of sovereignty back to the population and withdrawal. Then the foreign powers will have two possibilities, and face the dilemma quite precisely expressed by the British punk band the Clash in the title of their 1982 hit "*Should I stay or should I go*". If they withdraw prematurely, then the lack of sufficient security and stability might result in the re-emergence of violent conflict, and the previous efforts of postwar statebuilding could turn out to be a waste of resources. Alternatively, the foreign powers can choose to remain despite resistance in the population, with the possibility of further strengthening the resistance and experience that the effectiveness of the military presence decreases (ibid, 83-84).

Edelstein describes the evolution of an international military presence in three stages. During the initial "honeymoon" stage the population adjusts to the circumstances, and the international presence defines the tasks of its postwar statebuilding mission. Convincing the population to accept its presence can play a part in this stage. The initial stage ends when a population, or parts of it, starts to decide whether or not to accept the international presence. The outcome of such decision making can be based on both the level of security provided,

and the credibility of a promised return of sovereignty in accordance with the population's patience. Thus, how willing a population is to accept an international military presence is "shaped by its perceptions of the benefits (security or otherwise) of that presence" (ibid, 83). The third stage represents the duration dilemma itself, where the impatience and dissatisfaction of the population surface and manifest itself in various forms of resistance towards the foreign military presence. Postwar statebuilding is time consuming, and often more so than what pleases the population of the society in which it is attempted. That is why an international military presence often will face the dilemma of abandoning a postwar mission prematurely and perhaps sacrifice its accomplishments, or face the costs of prolonging it despite resistance.

The duration dilemma is not just relevant for the population in the war-torn society; it also affects the domestic politics of the foreign powers. As postwar statebuilding is both time consuming and costly, the domestic population of the foreign powers can also grow impatient and question the continuance of the postwar statebuilding mission (ibid, 84). The latter aspect is not one which receives any substantial attention over the course of the thesis.

### **3.2.5 Susceptibility factors**

In this section, the factors Edelstein identifies as influencing the susceptibility towards the duration dilemma are discussed. The first factor is a dilemma in itself, and treated as such in Edelstein's work. However, it is placed among the susceptibility factors here, since one potential problem with the footprint dilemma is that it can enhance the likelihood of encountering problems with the duration dilemma. Furthermore, the duration dilemma is the dilemma which is the main theoretical concept in this thesis.

#### **3.2.5.1 The footprint dilemma**

The footprint dilemma is concerned with the effects of the chosen footprint of an international military presence. Edelstein utilizes two dichotomies to describe the footprint of a military presence, with it being either large or small in terms of troop numbers, and whether there is a high or low degree of intrusiveness in the domestic affairs of the host state (ibid, 90). In reality it can obviously be more complex to define exactly how large or intrusive a foreign military presence is, however the dichotomies illustrate the two most important dimensions of

a footprint, and can be useful to illustrate the possible risks and benefits to the different footprints.

Edelstein summarises the potential risks and benefits of different footprints, and how they affect the relation with the duration dilemma, in the following way (ibid, 90-91):

- A small force with low intrusiveness is more likely to not create resentment within the population of the host state. But it can be difficult to achieve the more ambitious security tasks, thus it is sustainable for prolonged periods of time at low costs, and with limited results.
- A small force with high intrusiveness can be useful as a counterinsurgency force; however it may not have the capacity to provide security in large geographic areas. More intrusive forces are more prone to the duration dilemma.
- A large force with a low intrusiveness can be successful in the performance of actual statebuilding of national security forces, but despite size the low intrusiveness can result in problems with effective handling of developing insurgencies. Large forces are costly, and can be especially prone to impatience in the domestic population of the intervening powers.
- A large force with high intrusiveness can possibly provide control over the entire host state and effectively perform ambitious security tasks; however large and intrusive forces are costly and have a high probability of creating resentment in the population of the host state. Therefore it is the footprint most prone to the duration dilemma, as the populations of both host state and intervening powers are more likely to grow impatience and dissatisfaction with a prolonged presence.

As should be obvious from this short description, choosing the right footprint is a balancing act dependent on the challenges of the particular postwar statebuilding security operation. The key for both dilemmas is to find the presence that is “just right” (ibid, 94).

### **3.2.4.2 Type of intervention**

Another factor identified by Edelstein (2010, 95) is the distinction he makes between military occupations in contrast to complex peacekeeping. There are a couple of characteristics which define whether or not an intervention should be categorised as complex peacekeeping instead

of a military occupation; the first one being the issue of consent, is the intervention done with the consent of the host state? Postwar statebuilding as a military occupation is conducted against the wishes of the host state, and can thus be perceived as a breach of the population's sovereignty. The second characteristic is whether or not the intervention is done under the auspices of the UN; this is not very common for an intervention which is perceived as a military occupation, it usually lacks the approval of an international body. Military occupations are more prone to the duration dilemma than complex peacekeeping operations.

### **3.2.4.3 Threat environment**

The final factor influencing the susceptibility of a postwar statebuilding military presence towards the duration dilemma is the threat environment. Does the population face internal or external threats? According to Edelstein, this should be understood as whether or not the greatest threat to the security of the population stems from the aggression of an external power or dividing lines among social groups within the population. Internal divisions can possibly accelerate a diminishing of the initial welcome received by the international military presence, and make some social groups less appreciative of an intrusive international military. Since international military forces contribute to the success of a postwar statebuilding mission by providing security, any perception of them as a threat by one or more of the social groups within a divided society could possibly undermine the statebuilding process as a whole. In divided societies, the proneness of an international military presence towards the duration dilemma will be dependent on its ability to provide security and prevent the re-emergence of violence, and to avoid the appearance of preferential treatment of any of the social groups (Edelstein 2009, 96). A perceived partisan peacekeeper will struggle to maintain the support of a dissatisfied group in a divided society. In the case of a threat environment where the greatest threat to security is identified as an external aggressor, the population is more likely to welcome a prolonged presence of international military forces as it can provide valued protection and deter further aggression from the external power (ibid, 96-99).

### **3.3 Research method and operationalisation**

It should be obvious due to the characteristics of the study outlined in the former chapters that in a broader methodological sense, this study falls within the category of case study research. However, as can be derived from the eloquent discussion on the definition problem by Gerring (2007) in his work *Case Study Research*, simply assigning a study the label of case

study research does not really provide a proper clarification of the method. The term case study might refer to a small-N study, the thickness of research, the nature of evidence and how it is collected, a lack of clarity between case and context, source triangulation, or studies focused on a single observation, phenomenon, or instance. Overall, the possible understandings of what case study research is lead to some conceptual confusion, and in a sense it seems pointless to have aspirations in the direction of providing one final definition of what case study research is (ibid, p: 17-18). As Gerring points out (ibid, p: 36), cross-case studies with a large N is by definition quantitative, whereas case study research can be both qualitative and quantitative depending on the type within-case data. Hence the affiliation of case study research with qualitative methods cannot serve as a final, definitional trait.

The discussion on what case study research is will not be approached in greater depth, as it is not highly relevant for this thesis. First of all, this study fits within one of the most basic understandings of what case study research is, namely “the intense study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases (population)” (ibid, p:20). The interesting issues then are the possible gains and limitations of such a study.

### **3.3.1 External validity and population**

As any social scientist most likely is aware of, in-depth, single case studies have some limitations with regard to validity beyond the case studied. The selection of a single case from a broader population by default encounters problems with the issue of representativeness, and one cannot with any certainty in statistical terms argue that the findings can be generalised from a case to the broader population. In comparison, cross-case studies where the sample from the population is selected by an appropriate technique such as random sampling could be described as having the virtue of representativeness. An essential task when conducting case study research concerns “casing”, the conceptualising of the case you are studying, since that conceptualising will define the broader population of cases to which any eventual findings potentially could be relevant (ibid, p: 43).

How then is the subject of research conceptualised, or alternatively, what phenomenon is studied? Broadly speaking the phenomenon is the relationship between a population of an area and an international military presence responsible for postwar statebuilding security in

that area, within the framework of the duration dilemma. But the theoretical framework is also used to highlight the challenges towards having a unitary concept of “one” population in a case such as Kosovo.

At the core of the duration dilemma is the demand of a return of sovereignty that will manifest over time according to Edelstein. However, the separate ethnicities of the population in Kosovo (at least the Albanians and the Serbs) have differing opinions on what that would actually entail. As a consequence, the findings here could possibly be relevant to a population of cases where there is a postwar statebuilding mission in areas with disputes over sovereignty and territorial integrity within the population, with the addition of a strong element of inter-ethnic violence. Hence, a conceptualisation of KFOR as the case in the analysis must be that of an international military presence responsible for the security aspect of a postwar statebuilding mission operation in an area with a formally unresolved dispute over territorial integrity and significant problems with inter-ethnic violence.

During the course of the analysis, some findings can perhaps be argued to have relevance broader than the population clarified in the former section; thus, it is attempted to argue for the possible extent of the relevance of each separate conclusion in the analytical chapter. It is naturally not possible to say with 100 % certainty that the findings will have any particular validity in general terms, and it is difficult to give absolute and definite boundaries to the potential broader population of cases. The potential relevance beyond the case of KFOR is dependent on which factors are present and interacting in a given analytical conclusion. In most instances, the boundaries previously defined are likely to represent the boundaries for any theoretical external validity of a finding. Yet in the more extreme, one could identify the defining conceptualising features on a lower and more detailed level. Then the theoretic population for potential relevance beyond a specific analytical conclusion is a population of cases where the similar factors can be expected to interact in a similar dynamic. Consequently, one has to be highly conscientious about which factors that are analysed in connection with each separate finding during the course of the analysis. Basically, one has to carefully conceptualise the context and dynamic of each finding. Through such a rigorous conceptualisation it is possible to provide for arguments supporting a validity of the case of KFOR and Kosovo outside the defined population of cases by the use of logical reasoning.



### **3.3.2 Why case study? - Internal and conceptual validity**

The previous section alludes to the reasoning for conducting case study research on the subject of study in this thesis. It is not merely attempted to say that these factors influence the susceptibility towards the dilemmas, but how we should understand the factors in this given case, and in the continuation of that, how they affect the susceptibility in this particular understanding. This reflects a virtue of case studies, the ability to study causal mechanisms. The purpose here is not to determine the exact correlation between X and Y, but to understand how X affects Y. Identifying causal correlations and understanding complex dynamics within a specific context can be two very different tasks. It is not attempted to provide a thorough discussion on the issue of causal mechanisms as that has been covered in several works on research methodology (George & Bennett 2004, Gerring 2007), it should be sufficient to say that to study dilemmas and factors affecting them is not easily done by entirely quantitative studies.

Another virtue of case study research is strong internal validity in contrast to the weakness with regard to external validity (ibid). An in-depth case study allows the researcher to have greater faith in the causal inferences he or she identifies, as opposed to quantitative large-N studies which can present uncertainty on the issue of the direction in a correlation. Given the complexity of the subject of research, confidence in the internal conclusions of the analysis should be of greater concern than the possibility to generalise statistically. Furthermore, the conceptual validity of case study research is another strong point (ibid). With qualitative in-depth studies we can have greater faith in our findings due to an increased likelihood that the concepts we are employing are understood and operationalised correctly within the context of the study.

Conceptual validity is of pivotal importance in this thesis. This should almost be self-evident by the fact that the purpose here is to understand the concepts of Edelstein's theoretical framework under the special conditions of the Kosovo case. Exactly how that is achieved is discussed in greater detail in the operationalising sections of the next section. One can argue that it is the precise conceptualisation which will allow for any potential external validity of this thesis's analytical findings. As mentioned before in the section on Kosovo and sovereignty, some argue that Kosovo is *sui generis*, unique to the extent that any comparison with other cases should be futile. Critical of this position, Timothy Garton Ash said that

“Kosovo is unique, and there will be more Kosovos”. It is agreed here with the premise that Kosovo is unique; in fact, it is the special circumstances of the case that form the basis for the belief that an in-depth application of Edelstein’s concepts can bear alternative fruits. In themselves, the special circumstances of the Kosovo case are *sui generis*, but by applying concepts and conceptualising those specific circumstances, they can be understood more broadly. When those conditions are understood within more general concepts, it can be easier to identify potentially similar cases.

In his chapter on the potential benefits on case study research, Gerring (2007, p: 38-42) argues that case studies have an advantage over cross-case studies when it comes to hypothesis generating. Whereas cross-case studies are advantageous when it comes to test already developed hypotheses, case studies may be better suited to address a subject that is being studied for the first time, or approached in an entirely new manner. The complexity and subjectivity of case study research allow for thorough testing of several hypotheses and construction of theory. If the purpose is to test a hypothesis with a strong amount of certainty, then the greater representativeness of large N cross-case studies is more appropriate. As indicated several times, the aspiration here is to develop an enhanced understanding of certain concepts under particular conditions, and as such a case study of a single case with those conditions is the best choice of research method.

### **3.3.3 Operationalising the duration dilemma**

One of the most important questions to answer is how do we identify problems with the duration dilemma in a given case? As outlined above, the duration dilemma is in essence that over time, the population will grow impatient and dissatisfied with the international military presence and demand withdrawal and a return of sovereignty. Such a demand will often occur before the postwar statebuilding has reached a level where such a return does not constitute a possible threat to continued stability and safety. Is it possible to actually “measure” the presence of the dilemma with absolute precision? Arguably not, it will be extreme difficult, if not impossible, to find a single indicator or a set of indicators that could give a definitive answer to the question “is the duration dilemma present”?

It is, however, possible to find helpful indicators to begin an analysis. Edelstein describes the duration dilemma as consisting of growing impatience and dissatisfaction. Thus, the

occurrence of the duration dilemma should be marked by a substantial decline in the satisfaction with the international presence over a period of time. But simply identifying a highly noticeable drop in the levels of satisfaction with the international military presence does not mean it is possible to conclude that it is facing the duration dilemma. That would be dependent on the causes for the drop in levels of satisfaction, which theoretically could occur for entirely different reasons than the duration dilemma. For instance, problems with a too small footprint unable to perform security tasks can also be expected to inspire decreasing levels of satisfaction. Consequently, identifying a substantial drop with the level of satisfaction over a certain period of time would merely indicate that the presence could have reached the final stage in Edelstein's description, the duration dilemma. A more definite answer will require an in-depth study of the particular reasons in a given case, an argument for why it is believed that these dilemmas require qualitative case study research (although using quantitative survey data)

UNDP Kosovo has produced a series of *Early Warning Reports* since 2002, and more recently the *Public Pulse Reports*, which include surveys among the population of Kosovo on broad range of issues. Among these are surveys on the level of satisfaction with several institutions in Kosovo, including KFOR. These provide data on the level of satisfaction with KFOR in the population of Kosovo over time. Preferably, one should obviously have access to data from the start of the KFOR mission, but considering the fact that there are numbers from 2002 until today, this is not consider a major flaw.

As stated above, it is not stipulated here that a substantial decline in the level of satisfaction could automatically be attributed to problems with the duration dilemma. However, it can be argued that given the definition of the dilemma, an absence of such a decline would indicate the absence of problems with the duration dilemma. Hence the surveys of UNDP Kosovo provide a tool for arguing that KFOR has not reached the final stage in the development of a presence as described by Edelstein. The surveys in the reports of UNDP Kosovo are based on polling within the population of Kosovo, all of them involving more than a 1000 respondents. Sampling is done through random selection, and the samples are stratified based on geographic regions. In some of the reports it is stated that "in order to increase the reliability of opinions of the minority groups, the number of respondents belonging to minorities was chosen to be higher than their percentage participation in the entire population of Kosovo"

(UNDP Kosovo, 2002). The general belief is that we can have good faith in the data they provide, and that these reports represent the best available data material for the analysis.

The main challenge with these results is the fact that they are presented differently in the separate reports, and on some occasions the relevant data is presented by graphs instead of tables with exact percentages of the possible responses. It was contemplated trying to access the raw data material instead of just collecting the results directly from the UNDP reports, but it was decided that the process would be more time consuming than the relatively limited potential gains of could justify. The consequence of this decision is that it is not possible to present a single graph over the development in the level of satisfaction with KFOR in the Kosovar population from 2002 until 2011. Although ideal, it is far from essential for the purpose with these data here. What the reader will find presented here is instead a selection of results decided to be the most relevant for the analysis. Results available in the UNDP reports not presented here are occasionally referenced. The first table shows the percentage of respondents which stated that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the work of KFOR, with separate data for Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, over the time period 2002-2006.

**Table 3.1 Satisfaction with the work of KFOR, by ethnicity**

(UNDP Kosovo 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006)

	Kosovo Albanians	Kosovo Serbs
Nov. 2002	91.7	27.4
Mar. 2003	89.5	19.2
Jul. 2003	85.1	26.4
Nov. 2003	81.4	16.4
Mar. 2004	88.4	11.4
Jul. 2004	85.6	10.7
Nov. 2004	85.7	10.6
Mar. 2005	84.9	14.7
Jun. 2005	92.9	6.4
Sep. 2005	89.0	25.3
Jun. 2006	85.1	25.8
Sep. 2006	86.7	41.4

These results are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, but it is useful to make a few key observations. First of all, Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs have highly differing opinions on KFOR, as illustrated by the differences in the levels of satisfaction with the work of KFOR (this should perhaps not come as a great surprise given the role of NATO in the Kosovo intervention). Thus we cannot understand the Kosovo population as one unit with regard to the duration dilemma. Secondly, in Edelstein's description of the duration dilemma, the unrest of 2004 is used as an example. The Kosovo Albanians rioting is a good example of a "political" duration dilemma, yet these results illustrate that it cannot be understood as the military presence, KFOR, entering into the duration dilemma stage.

On the topic of the results among the Kosovo Serbs, there are a few important points to make. Firstly, the fact that there are much greater variations there could be an indicator of some problems with reliability (despite aforementioned attempts to improve it). Alternatively, it could also illustrate the Kosovo Serbs to a greater extent respond to KFOR's role in specific events affecting their security situation. Notice how the level of satisfaction is consistently at its lowest from the period of the 2004 unrest and some months onwards. However, the most important point to make is that the level of satisfaction with KFOR among Kosovo Serbs is relatively speaking much lower than that of the Kosovo Albanians from the very first available data, which intuitively can be considered an expression of a more general resistance towards the presence of NATO in Kosovo. Kosovo Serbs did not welcome the NATO intervention in the first place, and hence it can be argued that it is futile to understand their relation with KFOR along the lines of the development Edelstein outlines. As a consequence, since the relation between the Serbs of Kosovo and KFOR cannot resemble his description of how such a relationship could be expected to develop, it is the belief of the author that KFOR cannot be expected to experience a duration dilemma in its relation with Kosovo Serbs. There is, in other words, a good reason why Edelstein's analysis of the duration dilemma in Kosovo can only be valid for the Kosovo Albanians.

### **3.3.4 Operationalising the Footprint Dilemma**

The footprint dilemma is basically a balancing act, in which a too large footprint increases the susceptibility of an international military presence towards the duration dilemma, and a too small footprint may cause difficulties in the handling of security responsibilities.

To identify problems with the footprint dilemma contributing to problems with the duration dilemma obviously requires determining that the presence is indeed facing the duration dilemma, and then identifying the too large footprint as the cause of this, in full or in part. This line of inquiry is not of a particular strong relevance for the analysis here given that the initial conclusion is the belief that KFOR cannot be said to struggle with the duration dilemma. Additionally, as presented in the conflict overview chapter, the KFOR footprint has been drastically reduced since the initial deployment.

As stated above, the duration dilemma is the dilemma of main concern for the analysis. But the footprint dilemma may be of greater relevance with regard to the unrest of 2004, at least when analysing events from the perspective of the disaggregated military part of the international postwar statebuilding presence. The security sector of Kosovo, KFOR included, received harsh criticism for its inability to effectively deal with the violent riots. Whether or not that can be attributed to problems with the footprint dilemma due to a too small footprint will require an in-depth study of the criticism directed at KFOR. Were the insufficiencies in KFOR's handling of security challenges in March 2004 caused by either too few troops or too low intrusiveness (or both)? In the following analytical chapter this is discussed in greater detail, and the need for satisfactory mobility of the security forces is emphasised with regard to the level of intrusiveness, meaning both the will and ability to intervene when necessary.

### **3.3.5 KFOR: Which type of intervention?**

Operationalising the KFOR mission in Edelstein's dichotomy requires an application of the contextual characteristics of the Kosovo intervention. KFOR is a NATO military force operating under UN auspices, mandated by UNSCR 1244. As such, intuitively it appears natural to define KFOR as complex peacekeeping in contrast to a military occupation. This understanding is considered the most accurate from the perspective of the Kosovo Albanian populace. But in line with a recurring theme of this thesis, it is deemed questionable if this conclusion is the most accurate for the Serb segment of the Kosovar population.

An international military presence perceived as an occupation is according to Edelstein likely to be part of an intervention done against the will of the host state, and without a UN mandate. NATO's intervention in the Kosovo conflict occurred against the will of Serbia, and in the continuation of that, for those who view Kosovo as part of Serbia, without a mandate from the

UNSC. Based on the context of the Kosovo intervention, it can credibly be argued that it is more accurate to define the Kosovo Serb perception of KFOR to be that of a military occupation, or at least as the military component of an occupying international presence.

It can be useful to distinguish between the Albanian and the Serb perceptions of KFOR, although a dichotomy such as the one Edelstein utilizes might not be ideal. This argument goes back to the former separation made between the UN mandated international presence and the Kosovo War itself. As stated then, they cannot be understood as entirely separate, though the analysis is mainly concerned the first. The Kosovo War happened against the will of the host state (FRY). The following Serb acceptance of an international presence in Kosovo is probably best understood as accepting a necessary evil under the circumstances.

This claim cannot be substantiated with any precise “hard” data, but it is believed the reader can agree that it appears contextually sound. The operationalisation of the type of intervention is mainly the logical reasoning outlined above, but it is also based on surveys among the separate ethnicities in Kosovo on their opinion about preferred final status for Kosovo. The result presented here is from one of the earlier *Early Warning* reports. There is some variation in the Serb responses of separate reports, perhaps due to previously mentioned challenges with reliability, but the main difference between Serb and Albanian responses remain clear and consistent throughout.

**Table 3.2 Opinion on final status for Kosovo, by ethnicity**

(UNDP Kosovo 2004)

	Kosovo Albanian	Kosovo Serb
Independence with present borders	90.8	0.0
Partition	0.1	6.2
Current (international protectorate)	0.4	0.0
Unification with Albania	8.7	0.0
Confederate state in Serbia (as Montenegro)	0.0	1.0
Autonomous province in Serbia	0.0	92.8

The Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs poll in diametric opposition on this issue. For one thing, it illustrates the challenge with a concept like “return of sovereignty” in the Kosovo

case. Secondly, it is important for defining the perception of the separate groups in accordance with Edelstein's dichotomy. The international intervention and subsequent presence alters the viability of the separate outcomes. Independence for Kosovo is made much more likely by the intervention and the international presence, something which goes against the will of the Kosovo Serbs. If we accept the premise that the Kosovo War happened against the will of Kosovo Serbs, and that the presence of KFOR decreases the probability of a final status outcome in accordance with their will, then it should be justified to classify the perception of KFOR among Kosovo Serbs as that of a military occupation.

### **3.3.6 The threat environment of Kosovo**

When the core issue of a conflict is one of sovereignty and territorial integrity, a division such as external vs. internal almost by default becomes blurred. Since a central element of KFOR's presence is the provision of a secure environment, the threat environment factor naturally is of great importance. A key argument in this thesis is that the threat environments of Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs have to be considered separate from each other, and that the evolution of the Kosovo conflict has created a scenario in which the perceived greatest security threats are both external and internal simultaneously, for the separate groups.

The conflict in Kosovo originated formally as an internal conflict within Yugoslavia and Serbia, but the basis for the conflict was the wish of the majority Albanian population of Kosovo that their entity should be external. When NATO initiated OAF, which ended with the MTA and the establishment of Kosovo as an international protectorate, it contributed to making Belgrade a de facto external actor in Kosovo.

The security institutions of the government in Belgrade were the main sources of threats towards the security of Kosovo Albanians before and during the Kosovo War. The withdrawal of those security institutions from Kosovo was a requirement in the MTA, and monitoring the withdrawal among the initial tasks of KFOR. Thus the international intervention contributed to alleviating the security concerns of the Kosovo Albanian population, interestingly by making the threat a de facto external one. Milosevic argued that his actions in Kosovo were an internal matter, wherein the regime was dealing with an internal threat. As long as Serbia considers Kosovo part of their territory, they feel that issues in Kosovo are formally an internal matter. By making a formally internal security threat a de facto external one, the international intervention helped minimise the threat.



**Table 3.3 Percentage of population identifying Belgrade's influence as causing inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo, by ethnicity**

(UNDP Kosovo 2004, 2005)

	Kosovo Albanian	Kosovo Serb
Nov. 2003	48.7	0.5
Mar. 2004	42.7	0.0
Jul. 2004	40.7	0.0
Nov. 2004	46.3	0.0
Mar. 2005	51.0	0.0
Jun. 2005	50.9	0.0
Sep. 2005	49.4	0.6

The data in the above table is not directly concerned with security threats, but it can contribute to understanding the differing perceptions between of the two ethnic groups within Kosovo. Kosovo Albanians consistently identified the influence of Belgrade as a main cause of inter-ethnic tensions between the groups, whereas only a minimal percentage among Kosovo Serbs occasionally identifies it as a cause. These results reveal variation between the groups with regard to the impact of Belgrade's influence in Kosovo. It is also believed they can be considered an illustration of Kosovo Albanians rejection of Belgrade's right to influence in Kosovo. This survey is not really a key indicator in the analysis of the threat environment factor, but included due to the point that the complexity of the Kosovo case necessitates a comprehensive approach in the operationalisation. As with the former concepts, the operationalisation of the threat environment factor consist of an application to the contextual circumstances combined with relevant survey data.

**Table 3.4 Feeling of Safety vs. Crime and Violence when outside, by ethnicity**

(UNDP Kosovo 2008)

	Kosovo Albanian	Kosovo Serb
Very safe & somewhat safe	78.8	6.5
Very unsafe & somewhat unsafe	20.2	91.5

The table above contains results from the *Early Warning Report: Kosovo: #20/21 Special Edition* poll on feeling of safety, and reveals that the feeling of security differs greatly among

Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, with the latter revealing much higher levels of insecurity. Polls on the same issue in earlier reports reveal similar results:

**Table 3.5 Feeling of Safety on the streets, by ethnicity**

(UNDP Kosovo 2004, 2005)

<b>Kosovo Albanians</b>	Nov. 2004	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
Very safe & somewhat safe	50.0	66.6	64.4
Very unsafe & somewhat unsafe	50.0	33.4	35.6

<b>Kosovo Serbs</b>	Nov. 2004	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
Very safe & somewhat safe	20.6	15,8	21,8
Very unsafe & somewhat unsafe	79.4	84.2	78.2

As the reader can see, there are variations in the results, and the trend appears to be that the feeling of safety among Kosovo Albanians has increased over the years. But more important for the analysis than the exact numbers and the development within the groups is the consistent difference between them.

**Table 3.6 Percentage of respondents identifying “further aggravation of interethnic relations” as the circumstance most threatening to the stability of Kosovo, by ethnicity**

(UNDP Kosovo 2004, 2010)

	Kosovo Albanian	Kosovo Serb
Opinion poll 2004	4.2	77.2
Opinion poll 2010	2.9	38.3

These data also highlight the differing levels of concern over the inter-ethnic tensions within Kosovo among the two different ethnic groups. The change in the percentage among the Serbs that is the most concerned with inter-ethnic tensions is highly noticeable. On one hand, as noted before, the lower number of Serb respondents causes some concern with the exact reliability. On the other hand, the 2004 poll was conducted a few months after the unrest of March 2004, and as such a strong concern over aggravating inter-ethnic tensions should not be unexpected among Kosovo Serbs. An opinion poll from a report in 2005 has slightly

differing response alternatives, which also illuminates interesting variations in the responses of the separate ethnic groups.

**Table 3.7 Opinion on the biggest problems faced by Kosovo, percentage by ethnicity**  
(UNDP Kosovo 2005)

	Kosovo Albanian	Kosovo Serb
Interethnic relations	0.1	12.9
Public and personal security	0.1	30.7

There is a remarkable drop in the percentage of Kosovo Serbs expressing inter-ethnic tensions as their main concern compared to the poll of Table 3.6, conducted a year before. The reasons why the public and personal security alternative is included in this table is, firstly, that it is even more directly relevant for the subject of study, and secondly, because the introduction of security as an independent alternative in this poll may be one of the main reasons for the drop in concern over inter-ethnic tensions among Kosovo Serbs. Concern over public and personal security can then be viewed as a key component of the concern over further aggravation of inter-ethnic tensions among the Serbs in Kosovo, where the latter is perhaps best understood as a cause of the former. Internal threats constitute the greatest security concern for Kosovo Serbs, to a much greater extent than the internal inter-ethnic tensions of Kosovo represent a security threat for the Albanians there. This view is supported further by this quote from *Early Warning Report: Kosovo: Report #27*:

*“The January 2010 poll results, just like the previous polls of May, July, and November 2008 as well as those of April, June, and September 2009, confirms that the main sources of worry and anxiety differ according to ethnicity. For K-Albanians and Other ethnicities the main reasons for their anxiety are economic, while for K-Serbs it is both safety and the economic situation”* (UNDP Kosovo 2010, p: 20).

The contextual circumstances combined with survey data draw a sufficient picture of how the threat environment factor should be understood within the Kosovar population. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, it was considered formally interviewing some respondents in key positions, but given the topic of research, it was concluded that such a data collection could

not result in any invaluable additional gains in the data collection. It is not claimed that they could not provide interesting and useful insights, but the scientific value for this analysis would probably be limited. There are some obvious constraints on the general value of the opinion and memory of a single individual or a few individuals in comparison to survey material, and the concepts of interest in this thesis are localised within the broader groups of the Kosovo populace.

## **4. KFOR and the duration dilemma: the past, the present, and the future**

This chapter contains the main analysis of the thesis. Building upon the context, theoretical concepts, and the operationalisation of those concepts, an understanding of the duration dilemma and its affiliated factors for KFOR and the Kosovar population is presented. Through this presentation the purpose and outcome of KFOR's evolving presence in Kosovo is understood.

Firstly, there is an alternative analysis to the one by Edelstein on the subject of the 2004 unrest in Kosovo, and how it should be interpreted in light of the dilemma and the factors. Then the chapter proceeds with a general analysis of KFOR's evolving presence in Kosovo, arguing that KFOR has still not encountered the duration dilemma, and identifying the causes for this. The analysis is conducted separately for the two main ethnic groups, and the dilemma dynamics of the relation between Kosovo Serbs and KFOR is analysed in light of the "recognition game". It is identified how the dynamics in the relation between the population and KFOR are very different between the Kosovo Albanians and the Kosovo Serbs.

### **4.1 The civil disorder of 2004: duration dilemma for KFOR?**

The unrest of 2004 is used by Edelstein in an illustrative analysis of a situation where an international statebuilding presence experiences problems with the duration dilemma. As also Lemay-Hébert (2009) has pointed out, the violent protests that occurred in Mid-March of 2004 were, at least in part, caused by growing frustration within the Kosovo Albanian community with the international administration. UNMIK was seen as an obstacle on the road towards independence. During the riots, protesters targeted personnel and symbols of the international presence, in addition to ethnic minorities. Edelstein argues that this is a clear example of the duration dilemma, and that it illustrates the limitations on what may be achieved by military force alone if no political progress is made as well.

The validity of the above described analysis is not questioned. But since the dilemma and the factors to a great extent are presented as relevant for the military presence and not the statebuilding effort as a whole, it can be interesting to conduct an analysis exclusively from the perspective of the international military presence KFOR. Both Edelstein and Lemay-Hébert argue that the riots were a protest against UNMIK and not KFOR. In the disaggregated

analysis proposed here, the duration dilemma as a cause for the 2004 unrest in Kosovo must be understood as a political duration dilemma, not the international military presence facing a duration dilemma in its own relation to the Kosovar population.

If the duration dilemma in Kosovo of 2004 was a political duration dilemma rather than a duration dilemma for KFOR, then Edelstein's analysis is not satisfactory. Not due to straight forward incorrectness, but to the fact that a more comprehensive analysis is required to fully understand the riots of 2004 from the perspective of KFOR, based on the theoretical concepts of Edelstein.

To illustrate this point, the reader is referred to the operationalisation of the duration dilemma in the former chapter. The lack of a noticeable decline in the level of satisfaction is viewed as evidence of absence of the duration dilemma. Unless there was such a decline in the level of satisfaction with KFOR in the months leading up to the riots of 2004, KFOR had not entered the duration dilemma stage in the development of its relation with the population of Kosovo. As table 3.1 reveals, this was not the case. Satisfaction among Kosovo Albanians remained consistently high, above 80 % throughout 2002, 2003, and 2004, whereas the level of satisfaction among Kosovo Serbs in contrast remained low, never climbing above 30 %. In conclusion, KFOR did not encounter the duration dilemma in advance of the 2004 unrest.

The interesting question then becomes; how best to interpret the unrest from KFORs perspective? A main point must be that the 2004 unrest in Kosovo is a very good example of how a political duration dilemma for the civilian postwar statebuilding efforts can manifest itself as violence, creating a requirement for crisis management by the international military presence.

If we accept the premise that the unrest of 2004 should not be understood as KFOR encountering the duration dilemma itself, but rather how a political and/or civilian duration dilemma can contribute to the occurrence of a security threat KFOR must handle, then the most important aspect of the 2004 riots should be how KFOR responded. That being said, it is neither the purpose of nor plausible within the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed discussion on how the international security presence performed its tasks in March of 2004. But the criticism KFOR received in the aftermath of events can be interesting if it can be

connected to the concepts of the analytical framework. It is therefore useful to analyse the riots briefly from the perspective of two of the factors affecting susceptibility towards the duration dilemma, namely the footprint dilemma and the threat environment.

The former is perhaps the most interesting in this regard. It should also be emphasised how the riots illustrate the differentiated understanding of the threat environment for separate ethnic groups. In addition to attacks on the international presence, the riots included violent attacks on ethnic minorities in Kosovo, perpetrated by members of the Kosovo Albanian majority, who subsequently fought back. It is also telling that the riots developed out of protests against the arrest of members of the KLA on charges of war crimes. The majority of Kosovo Albanians did not believe that members of the KLA should be sent to The Hague on war crimes charges (UNDP Kosovo 2003, p: 24). Numerous veterans of the KLA had at the time been incorporated into the autonomous security institutions of the Kosovo government. In summary, many former members of an institution also responsible for war crimes became members of autonomous security institutions in Kosovo, such as the KPS and the KPC. The majority group in the population of Kosovo objected to prosecution of former members of the KLA in The Hague, and protests against the arrest resulted in widespread violent attacks against ethnic minorities in Kosovo. All of the above contributes to understanding why the threat environment of Kosovo Serbs is best understood as one of internal security threats.

Interestingly, while the international community intervened in Kosovo on behalf of Kosovo Albanians, in the aftermath of the Kosovo War it was the other ethnic minorities of Kosovo who needed the international protection the most within Kosovo itself. The 2004 March riots illustrate this, and NATO itself has stressed that protection of ethnic minorities is a key task of KFOR<sup>2</sup>. Taking that into consideration, the harsh criticism KFOR received in reports by ICG (2004) and HRW (2004) describes in detail how KFOR failed to uphold its responsibilities in this regard, with the exception of a few instances where KFOR troops provided valuable security. As the reports state, there were several instances wherein KFOR did not respond to requests for assistance, and in most situations where KFOR troops were actively involved, it became obvious that they lacked both training and equipment for the handling of civil disorder. They also failed to pre-emptively send troops to key locations such as Mitrovica after the riots broke out. Furthermore, as the reports highlight, the riots did not

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<sup>2</sup> As discussed in sections on KFOR's mandate in chapter two.

just happen out of nowhere. There had been an increase in the number of violent attacks against minorities, even when under the protection of KFOR. Growing frustration with the political process was not an unknown structural factor, and contributed to the eventual outbreak of violence. Additionally, parts of the rioting had an organised character well beyond what you could expect from spontaneous protests (ibid).

Although the shootings, roadblocks, and the drowning Albanian boys were essential catalysts for the riots, when studying the situation in Kosovo prior to the riots one can only conclude that they should not have come as a complete surprise (granted, a conclusion much easier to reach with the benefit of hindsight). The point that catalysts such as those mentioned above potentially could induce widespread civil disorder within the structure of growing frustration among the Kosovo Albanians should at least have been considered a possibility. Despite this, the normalisation of security arrangements and the downsizing of KFOR's footprint continued. The fact that KFOR had no capabilities available for dealing with civil disorder and riots reveals a huge deficit when it comes to contingency planning, in addition to lacking appropriate intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities. However, a thorough analysis of KFOR's intelligence capabilities and level of preparedness is not the main issue here.

What is interesting is the impact of KFOR's footprint. As the reader may recall, addressing the footprint dilemma is a balancing act along two axes, size and level of intrusiveness. Edelstein is mostly interested in how a large and intrusive footprint can make an international military presence more susceptible towards the duration dilemma, but the other scale of the balance is more interesting in this case; how a too small footprint can cause the military presence to fail in its performance of security tasks.

Firstly, there is the issue of footprint size. One rather obvious but nevertheless essential factor that Edelstein neglects to mention, military resources are limited, and there are often competing interests with regard to how and where they should be deployed. An international postwar statebuilding or peacekeeping effort is perhaps more likely to suffer from a lack of available military resources than a too large footprint causing problems with the duration dilemma<sup>3</sup>. This is relevant for KFOR since a drastic reduction in the size of its footprint had

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<sup>3</sup> See several case studies in *United Nations Interventionism* edited by Mats Berdal & Spyros Economides (2007).



taken place in the years following the initial deployment, yet after the 2004 riots approximately 2500 additional troops were sent as reinforcements for KFOR. It is difficult not to interpret this as an indicator of KFOR's footprint being reduced too much, too rapidly, in the time period prior to the unrest in March 2004. Exactly to what extent this contributed to the failure of KFOR in the handling of the situation is not something that is analysed in greater depth here, but the fact that reinforcement was deemed necessary indicates it at least had some influence. The decision making procedure within NATO on the issue of the size of KFOR is not discussed. Such an analysis must take into consideration factors beyond the security situation in Kosovo itself, such as the change in attention towards the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Edelstein briefly emphasises another issue, namely that large and prolonged military involvement abroad is also likely to create resentment domestically for the intervening powers. Undoubtedly an interesting discussion, but not one it is necessary to delve into here.

The issue of intrusiveness is one which is highly applicable on the subject of KFOR's failure to address the need for crisis management in March 2004. Intrusiveness is a less clear cut concept than the one of size. As Edelstein (2009, p: 90) states, it is a matter of "... degree of intrusiveness within the domestic affairs of the host state". Given the extensive mandate of the international presence in Kosovo, in reality transferring Kosovo into an international protectorate, the intrusiveness of KFOR must intuitively be understood as high. But whether or not an international military presence genuinely is highly intrusive must be dependent on its will and/or ability to intervene in situations requiring its attention. KFOR did not have the appropriate resources to conduct the crisis management necessitated by the 2004 unrest, and as the criticism of the aforementioned reports reveals, KFOR did not even respond in every instance when its assistance was requested. Such a lack of will and ability to intervene in a situation which so blatantly is a massive threat towards the secure environment of Kosovo should be identified as an instance of too low intrusiveness. Discrepancies between the type of crisis that occurs and what type of crisis the international security presence have the will and/or ability to handle must be identified as problems with the degree of intrusiveness, perhaps most accurately described as a discrepancy between intended intrusiveness and actual intrusiveness.

To summarise, the interpretation of the unrest of 2004 in Kosovo differs from that of Edelstein due to the fact that it is analysed exclusively from the perspective of KFOR. The unrest must then be understood as how a political/civilian duration dilemma can manifest itself as a security threat requiring crisis management by the international military presence. The failure of KFOR to provide sufficient crisis management was in part due to a lack of intelligence capabilities and contingency planning, and that as the crisis unfolded, the footprint of KFOR appears to have been too small with regard to both size and intrusiveness. The main implication of this is in no way a profound discovery, and should be broadly valid: to provide a secure environment, the footprint must be appropriate for the threat environment; hence a thorough understanding of the threat environment is necessary. KFOR failed in this instance, or as a senior UNMIK official put it:

*We always knew that Kosovo would not be invaded. KFOR is in Kosovo to protect against civil violence, disturbances, and ethnic violence. They don't need tanks but riot gear and shields, and soldiers trained in dealing with public disorder. If KFOR was not prepared for such civil disorder, then why the heck not? What did they think they were in Kosovo for?*  
(HRW 2004, p: 1).

#### **4.2 KFOR and the Kosovo Albanians**

The final conclusions of the previous segments present a nice segue to a discussion on the dynamics of the relation between KFOR and the Kosovo Albanians. From the perspective of the Albanians, why are KFOR in Kosovo? To repeat a quote from the former chapter on the theoretical framework: how willing a population is to accept an international military presence is “shaped by its perceptions of the benefits (security or otherwise) of that presence” (Edelstein 2009, p: 83). This is the second stage in the evolution of an international military presence, the stage before the presence move into the duration dilemma stage.

In other words, for KFOR not to encounter the duration dilemma among the Kosovo Albanians, its presence has to be perceived as beneficial, and not proceed into the stage where the Kosovo Albanians become dissatisfied and impatient, demanding that KFOR transfer security responsibility to an autonomous security institution. Before the utility of KFOR for

Kosovo Albanians are analysed more in-depth, it should be stated that the data from Kosovo reveals evidence of absence of the duration dilemma among Kosovo Albanians.

As evident in figure 4.1 of the *Public Pulse Report #2* (UNDP Kosovo 2011b, p: 28), the level of satisfaction with KFOR among Kosovo Albanians has continuously remained above 70 %. In comparison, figure 1.1 in the *Early Warning Report: Kosovo: Report #27* (UNDP Kosovo 2010a, p: 11) illustrates how the level of satisfaction with UNMIK dropped from above 60 % in late 2002 to just above 20 % in March of 2004. Given the absence of such a drop in level of satisfaction with KFOR among Kosovo Albanians<sup>4</sup> the conclusion must be that KFOR has not evolved into the duration dilemma stage of its relation with the Kosovo Albanian population. Having concluded that the duration dilemma has not yet appeared, the interesting subject to analyse is then: why not?

According to Edelstein's discussion, an international military presence that is part of a complex statebuilding mission, protecting against an external security threat with a limited footprint is the least susceptible towards the duration dilemma. Building upon the operationalisation in the previous chapter, let us analyse those factors in the Albanian segment of the Kosovar populace.

Firstly, the footprint of KFOR has evolved from more than 50 000 to approximately 5000 in late 2011/ early 2012. Its intrusiveness in Kosovar affairs has also decreased, though events of the last half of 2011 have revealed that KFOR still might be called upon to perform security tasks. But overall, it seems justified to conclude that the footprint of KFOR is not very likely to induce the resistance associated with the duration dilemma among the Kosovo Albanians.

Secondly, KFOR is part of a complex postwar statebuilding mission with a UN mandate. It seems unlikely that the Kosovo Albanians should perceive them as a military occupation. To expand upon this argument, the threat environment of the Kosovo Albanians should be analysed. It is a key element in how the perceived benefits of KFOR for the Kosovo Albanians should be understood within this conceptual framework.

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<sup>4</sup> At least by end of 2011.

The UNMIK official quoted earlier states that Kosovo obviously would not be invaded. The argument seems to be that there is no external security threat, and as such KFOR should be prepared to perform security tasks connected with security threats originating from the internal lines of division within Kosovo. This argument should not be very controversial, and the claim that KFOR in advance of the 2004 unrest was not sufficiently prepared for the type of security challenges most likely to demand their attention is justified. That being said, there is still one question which it can be useful to shed some light on within the boundaries of this specific issue: why was (and still is) it so obvious that Kosovo would not be invaded?

The internal/external division is so important because it goes to the core of the conflict; in its most basic form, the Kosovo conflict is a conflict about where the line should be. The Kosovo Albanians welcomed the international intervention because it alleviated the insecurity the actions of the security institutions of Belgrade created. Kosovo Albanians suffered from violence from those institutions, and they wanted them to be external actors. Prior to the Kosovo War, the violent conflict within Kosovo must necessarily be understood as an internal conflict of Yugoslavia, but the international intervention and subsequent postwar statebuilding presence altered that line; Belgrade became a *de facto* external actor. NATO's war and the presence of KFOR in Kosovo can be understood as an externalisation of the government of Belgrade. Through that very externalisation, the security threat the security forces of Belgrade represented for Kosovo Albanians was alleviated. It is the international intervention and continued military presence which has made the involvement of Serbian security institutions so improbable. Although it is not the most tangible aspect of KFOR's work, it should be understood as the essential one from the Kosovo Albanian perspective. Not really of any prominent importance with regard to the daily work of KFOR, but a key to understand why it seems unlikely that KFOR will encounter the duration dilemma among Kosovo Albanians for some time.

On the premise of the importance of the externalisation argument it is possible to discuss the evolution of KFOR perceived benefits for Kosovo Albanians. To understand why, consider this: the initial externalisation made Kosovo into an international protectorate, limiting the influence of Belgrade. KFOR's importance decreases as the externalisation is further cemented. The declaration of independence contributed to this process. Serbia still refuses to accept itself as an external actor formally, but in reality they have become one to a great

extent<sup>5</sup>. The prospect of EU integration has probably played a role, but that is a discussion deserving more attention than can be devoted here. Importantly, the threat of Serbian involvement in the affairs of Kosovo from the Kosovo Albanian perspective will be minimised when Serbia formally accepts itself as an external actor. Until then, the international presence plays a role as a guarantee against further involvement.

The unresolved formal status of Kosovo also creates challenges for the demand associated with the duration dilemma, a return of sovereignty. As long as sovereignty is an unresolved issue, KFOR cannot simply pack up its bags and leave, transferring its security responsibilities to an independent security institution of Kosovo, the KSF. Agreement upon the authority of the KSF in Kosovo is not complete, as parts of the Kosovar population do not recognise the full and independent authority of the government in Pristina over Kosovo.

Hypothetically, if the entire international presence left tomorrow, could not Serbia attempt to exercise authority there, given that they still consider it a province under international administration and not an independent state? In reality it might be unlikely, at least in the areas of Kosovo with an Albanian majority, but it should not be neglected that it is the international presence which ultimately prevents and/or deters such an involvement. And of course, as stated earlier in the thesis, the exact division of responsibility for security between separate international institutions present in Kosovo is another issue. But theoretically speaking, the externalisation dynamic is highly relevant, and one that must be understood when embarking upon a military security mission in an area with an unresolved dispute over the territorial integrity.

Edelstein points out that an international military presence is less likely to face the duration dilemma if it protects against an external threat. The conclusion here is that when the presence operates in a conflict over sovereignty such as Kosovo, where the majority population of the entity supports political separatism from the state, the nature and importance of the divide between internal and external threats are altered. By its very presence, the international militaries are likely to contribute to the externalisation of the security forces of the state, which the majority of the population in the entity is likely to perceive as their main security threat. Until the conflict over sovereignty is resolved, the susceptibility of the presence towards the duration dilemma will remain very low. Of course, if the military presence is seen

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<sup>5</sup> Though the development of its influence in North Kosovo is another discussion, see (ICG 2012).

as an obstacle on the path towards the goal of independence, then the presence might face the duration dilemma. But as long as the dispute over the territorial integrity remains unresolved, the prospect of withdrawal and return of sovereignty face some severe practical challenges. Based on this argument, one can make the prediction that the international military presence is unlikely to face the duration dilemma until some kind of formal agreement has been reached upon the issue of sovereignty. In the case of Kosovo, it is unlikely that KFOR will move into the duration dilemma stage of its relation with the Kosovo Albanians until the final status of Kosovo is resolved.

#### **4.3 KFOR and the Kosovo Serbs**

The relationship between KFOR and Kosovo Serbs are in many ways diametrically opposite to the one between KFOR and Kosovo Albanians. NATO, KFOR, and the international presence as a whole are all part of an international intervention the Serbs generally object to. Any acceptance of KFOR's authority is better understood as acceptance of a "necessary evil" originating from the circumstances of the Kosovo War and its conclusion through the MTA. To describe it as a genuine welcome in the first place would be inaccurate, and that would be an inaccuracy that negatively impacts the prospect of analysing the relationship between Kosovo Serbs and KFOR comprehensively. Can the evolution of a relationship as outline by Edelstein be applied to the relationship of KFOR and Kosovo Serbs? This is the initial question we have to answer before it is possible to reach any fruitful conclusions. The first stage Edelstein identifies is the so-called honeymoon stage, which eventually develops into a second stage where the population decides whether or not it should embrace or reject the international military presence. The duration dilemma is the third stage.

First of all, the attitude of the Kosovo Serbs towards KFOR during the first part of its presence can hardly be described as a honeymoon. Or, to build upon the marriage analogy, it can perhaps be described as a honeymoon, but in such an example it is a honeymoon following a marriage arranged completely against the will of the Kosovo Serbs. Secondly, the subsequent stage of either acceptance or rejection implies that there is a genuine choice to be made. Kosovo Serbs could obviously have actively resisted the authority of KFOR, but unless there is another viable security source it is hardly a realistically available opportunity. The Kosovo War and the international presence in Kosovo effectively removed the alternative of Belgrade's security institutions. If the Serbs decided not to embrace the protection offered by

KFOR, they would be entirely self-dependent. To illustrate this point, the table below presents data from the *Mitrovica Public Opinion Survey* (UNDP Kosovo 2011a). It is from a poll in November of 2010, asking the respondents which institutions they considered a main provider of security to the people of the Mitrovica municipality.

**Table 4.1 Main institutions providing security, by ethnicity**

	Kosovo Albanian	Kosovo Serb
EULEX	5.8	10.9
KFOR	9.8	64.3
KPS	72.5	11.6
KSF	11.4	3.1
Serb Police	0.0	35.2

Among Kosovo Serbs, KFOR was by far the institution most of the respondents considered a main institution providing security, and interestingly enough, Serb police more than twice as often as the KPS. To understand the relation between KFOR and Serbs better, let us turn to the factors affecting susceptibility towards moving into the duration dilemma stage.

Whether or not the presence is perceived as military occupation or complex peacekeeping is somewhat problematic, and perhaps a dichotomy such as this does not allow for an in-depth understanding of the Serbian perception of KFOR. Although the international presence is operating under a UN mandate, and in general terms should be understood as complex peacekeeping, the Serbs in Kosovo consider the entity a province of Serbia. Independence for Kosovo is rejected as an idea, and from the perspective of the Serbs in Kosovo the international presence must inevitable be seen as a factor preventing Serbia from exercising its rightful authority. Also, although KFOR is officially status neutral, it appears fair to assume that given NATO's role in the intervention, Kosovo Serbs, at least partly, consider KFOR an enabler of the government of the Republic of Kosovo's moves towards independence. In summation, when applying the dichotomy of Edelstein, it is more accurate to describe the Kosovo Serb perception of KFOR as one resembling that of an occupying force.

With regard to the threat environment, the one faced by Kosovo Serbs is very different from the one faced by Kosovo Albanians. As illustrated by tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 in the preceding chapter, Kosovo Serbs are consistently feeling more insecure and express a deeper concern over possible aggravation of inter-ethnic tensions. There have been several examples of attacks against ethnic minorities, and the protection of them is by KFOR itself considered a key task. The overall picture of the threat environment of Kosovo Serbs is one defined by internal lines of conflict, and more so than for Kosovo Albanians. This reality on the ground must be understood as a main reason for the attitude towards KFOR among Kosovo Serbs. They face security threats, and of the available alternatives, KFOR is considered the most important and credible provider of security.

It was previously argued that an important factor contributing to the consistently high levels of satisfaction with KFOR among Kosovo Albanians was the fact that it is seen as a guarantee of the continued externalisation of the government in Belgrade. As for Kosovo Serbs, the results in similar polls reveal a greater degree of variation. Table 3.1 illustrates how the level of satisfaction varies between 6.4 % and 41.4 %. Similar results can be found in figure 4.2 of the *Early Warning Report: Kosovo: Report #27* (UNDP Kosovo 2010a, p: 27), wherein the level of satisfaction fluctuates between above 50 % and below 5 %. These high fluctuations make it difficult to actually use this indicator as either evidence for or evidence of absence of the duration dilemma. One possible explanation could be that the level of satisfaction with KFOR among Kosovo Serbs to a greater extent reflects the perception of KFOR's performance of the regular security tasks within Kosovo at a given time. This explanation seems plausible due to the fact that Kosovo Serbs face a threat environment of internal security threats more than Kosovo Albanians. To study this in greater depth would require a detailed study of all major and minor events representing security threats to the Serbs in Kosovo where KFOR were or perhaps should have been involved, and see if a pattern can be identified. Such an endeavour lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

From the perspective of Kosovo Serbs it is argued that KFOR should be understood as an occupying force, somewhat partisan on the side of the Kosovo Albanians, and that the Kosovo Serbs face an internal threat environment. Based on Edelstein predictions, KFOR should be highly susceptible towards the duration dilemma in its relation with Kosovo Serbs. In the instance of Kosovo Albanians, it was argued above why it is unlikely that KFOR will face the



duration dilemma with them until the issue of final status for Kosovo is resolved. On the issue of Kosovo Serbs relation with KFOR, it makes little sense to actually consider the duration dilemma as described by Edelstein a plausible alternative. The dilemma is described as a situation wherein dissatisfaction and impatience with the international military presence create resentment and a demand for withdrawal and a return of sovereignty. Such a situation is just not realistic under the circumstances of the Kosovo case.

Kosovo Serbs “welcome” the prolonged stay of KFOR because they face security threats and consider KFOR a more trustworthy provider of security than any autonomous security institution of Kosovo. The intervention in Kosovo externalised Serbia, and given that most member states of both the EU and NATO have recognised Kosovo as an independent state, it is just unrealistic that they will withdraw and return final sovereignty over Kosovo to the government of Serbia, which will be the kind of sovereignty return Kosovo Serbs favour. If a duration dilemma as the one Edelstein describes can exist in the relation between KFOR and Kosovo Serbs, that dilemma was present in the relation from the very start. The more realistic conclusion is that the concept is not applicable, as the presence of KFOR all along has been counterproductive to the ideal solution for Kosovo the Serbs envision. If the traditional duration dilemma Edelstein describes is not applicable, an attempt to identify an alternative dynamic in the relation becomes increasingly interesting.

#### **4.4 The “recognition game” in Kosovo: a duration dilemma in reverse?**

The duration dilemma is described by Edelstein as an “obsolescing welcome”, but that description hardly fits the evolution in the relationship between KFOR and Kosovo Serbs. For something to obsolete, it is required to be present in the first place. KFOR was never truly welcomed in Kosovo by the Serbs there, but that does not by default imply KFOR’s continued presence in Kosovo as not beneficial for the Kosovo Serbs. The dynamic in the relationship is more accurately understood as a “generated welcome” than an obsolescing one. There are two relevant sides to such a dynamic in this case.

Before the concept of a duration dilemma in reverse is elaborate upon, it can be useful to repeat certain aspects of the KFOR enterprise. Firstly, the concept of an international military presence responsible for security during a postwar statebuilding mission is a dual concept; the general creation and upholding of a secure environment, and the statebuilding aspect itself,

the establishment and/or strengthening of an autonomous institution security responsibility eventually can be transferred to. The development of the KSF following the declaration of independence in 2008 is the statebuilding aspect of NATO and KFOR's work in Kosovo.

Rick Fawn and Oliver P. Richmond from the School of International Relations at the University of St. Andrews (2009) discuss the concept of ethnic sovereignty and the recognition game in an article in the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, with Kosovo as a case. Their focus is on the Kosovo Albanian government in Pristina, and how it used the international presence to strengthen its claims for sovereignty. They argue that the main problem with the recognition game in entities such as Kosovo is that it fosters a vertical process, where the relation with important external actors such as the Western powers and international organisations becomes more important than a horizontal process between local actors, in other words not focusing on what they define as "shared governance". This approach can be useful for understanding some elements in the dynamics of the Kosovo Serb-KFOR relation.

In Kosovo, the government of Pristina seeks recognition for an independent Kosovo, whereas the government of Belgrade and the Serbs in Kosovo oppose such a position. As stated previously in this thesis, these two actors are strongly connected, yet they cannot be considered entirely similar. This is illustrated by the ongoing dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the EU. Such a dialogue on technical issues can, on the one hand, be understood as the kind of vertical process Fawn & Richmond favour, at least to a certain extent made possible by the aspirations of the government in Belgrade for EU-integration. But on the other hand, the Pristina-Belgrade-Brussels troika does not necessarily involve the Serbs in Northern Kosovo, which means that there is a lacking vertical process within Kosovo itself. This is relevant for both aspects of KFOR's mission in Kosovo.

Firstly, let us take a closer look at the Serb response to the establishment of the KSF (Belgrade and Northern Kosovo were unison on this issue). KSF has been described as "an illegal paramilitary group" and "a direct threat to national security, peace and stability in the entire region" by Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic (BBC 2009). Furthermore, the Serbs insisted that KFOR and NATO should have full authority over the force, and it was stated that they considered the purpose of the KSF to be the control of Kosovo Serbs. A member of the

Serb National Council for Northern Kosovo claimed “... clearly the wish is to intimidate the Serbs with these forces to bring about a new wave of ethnic cleansing” (B92 2009).

There are two sides to the Serb rejection of the KSF. With regard to the recognition game, neither the government of Belgrade nor the Serbs in Northern Kosovo recognise Pristina’s full authority over Kosovo. The insistence on the authority of NATO and KFOR can be understood as a tool for undermining the authority of Pristina. Fawn & Richmond identify how the government in Pristina used the international presence to promote their claim to independence, but the international presence can serve a similar yet diametrically opposite purpose for the Serb side. The authority of the international presence is favoured over the authority of Pristina, and this generates a welcome for the international presence. When the Serbs insist that KFOR and NATO should maintain full control over the KSF, it can be seen as part of this dynamic.

Importantly, the Serb rejection of KSF’s authority cannot merely be seen as some kind of mischievous attempt to undermine Pristina’s authority. By doing that, the security concerns of the Kosovo Serbs would be neglected. In the discussions on the threat environment of the Kosovo Serbs, their stronger concerns for general public security and inter-ethnic violence were identified. It has also been illustrated how the Kosovo Serbs to a much greater extent consider KFOR a credible source of security in comparison to the KSF, further illustrated by figure 4-2 in the *Public Pulse Report #2* (UNDP Kosovo 2011b, p: 28), where the consistently very low level of satisfaction with KSF among Kosovo Serbs is shown.

In other words, there are two separate factors that contribute to the dynamic of a prolonged welcome for KFOR among Kosovo Serbs; firstly, the authority of the international presence is preferred to the authority of the government in Pristina. An insistence upon the former can be a tool for undermining the latter. Secondly, the Kosovo Serbs have strong security concerns and lack faith in the credibility of the autonomous institutions of Kosovo as security providers, hence a continued presence of KFOR is perceived as beneficial to their security.

However, there is an additional third way the recognition game and Kosovo Serb rejection of Pristina’s authority is relevant for the work of KFOR. The events of the last half of 2011 illustrate how attempts by Pristina to exercise authority over the Serb dominated North

Kosovo is met with resistance, eventually resulting in situations threatening the secure environment of Kosovo. In the end, KFOR had to intervene and assume control over two border post. Additionally, attempts to dismantle roadblocks resulted in violent clashes with Kosovo Serbs. The occupation of the courthouse in Mitrovica and subsequent clashes between international security forces and Kosovo Serbs mentioned in the second chapter can be seen as a similar instance of resistance towards the authority of the government of an independent Kosovo creating security challenges KFOR has to address.

As pointed out in a report from ICG (2012), these recent developments reveal a breach in the relations between Belgrade and the Serbs in North Kosovo, with the latter not trusting that the former will fully protect their interests. This can create challenges in the regular work with the provision of a secure environment, but also reveals that the current process in the aforementioned troika will not necessarily create the needed vertical process inside Kosovo that potentially could alleviate the demand for an international security presence.

## **5 Conclusions and implications**

This chapter begins with a summary of the analytical conclusions from the former chapters. It proceeds with a broader discussion on some possible implications of the analysis, and the potential future relevance of KFOR. These implications can best be understood as an attempt to complicate one of the policy implications from Edelstein's work. Towards the end a possible future research project, building upon the analysis of this thesis, is outlined, focusing on external factors such as a domestic duration dilemma for the contributing states, and how those external factors can negatively impact the prospect of KFOR fulfilling its potential.

### **5.1 Analytical summary**

The 2004 unrest can alternatively be understood as a political/civilian duration dilemma causing a security threat requiring intervention by KFOR, but a lack of will and/or ability partly due to a too small footprint caused KFOR to fail in the performance of its security task. There are some broadly valuable lessons to be learned from this incident on the issues of intelligence and contingency planning, and how a failure to fully comprehend the threat environment can result in a footprint inappropriate for the performance of the most needed security providing tasks. In reality, the degree of intrusiveness of the presence can end up being lower than intended.

Although not a central part of their daily tasks, the presence of KFOR serves a guarantee of the continued externalisation of the government in Belgrade, a dynamic likely to prevent problems with the duration dilemma in the relationship with the Albanian population until the final status issue has been resolved. This conclusion can be valid for similar international military presences involved in postwar statebuilding or peacekeeping in areas with unresolved disputes over territorial integrity, and is a factor in understanding why the military aspect of such endeavours can be less susceptible towards the duration dilemma. An external security threat makes the presence less susceptible towards the duration dilemma, even more so when the security threat is externalised by the international military intervention.

The evolution of the relationship between KFOR and Kosovo Serb does not entirely fit the normal evolution described by Edelstein. When a return of sovereignty in accordance with the preferences of an ethnic group is unrealistic, the relationship with the group cannot

realistically be expected to reach a stage as the duration dilemma. In the case of Kosovo and KFOR an alternative dynamic can be identified; the international military presence receives a “generated welcome”, almost reverse of the obsolescence associated with a regular duration dilemma, despite the fact that it is perceived as a partisan occupying force in a threat environment of internal threats. This generated welcome is caused by two separate factors; one, the authority of the international presence is a tool for undermining the authority of the government of the entity; two, the international military presence is considered a more credible security provider against the inter-ethnic violence than autonomous security institutions within the entity. In addition, the rejection by an ethnic minority of the authority of a secessionist government in an entity can cause violent resistance if the secessionist government attempts to exercise full authority.

There are in other words several “dualities” in the purpose and outcome of KFOR’s presence in Kosovo. It serves as a provider of differing types of security for the two main ethnic groups with their highly differing threat environments, and importantly, the footprint required for the provision of a secure environment differ between the two separate threat environments. The 2004 unrest was an example of failure with regard to the provision of security against an internal security threat, most relevant for Serbs and other ethnic minorities. Despite this failure, KFOR is still perceived as the most credible source of security for the Serbs in North Kosovo. On the one hand, KFOR’s continued presence is beneficial both for security provision, and for undermining a potential full authority over Kosovo for the government in Pristina, while resistance towards that authority simultaneously has resulted in violent clashes between KFOR and Kosovo Serbs. For Kosovo Serbs, KFOR can be both a protector and the opposition. For the Kosovo Albanians, KFOR’s presence has been of lesser importance on a daily basis as a result of the externalisation of Belgrade’s security forces in the first period of the presence of KFOR, and that the autonomous security institutions of Kosovo now are under control of the government in Pristina. For the elements within the Kosovo Albanian ethnicity willing to use violence against Kosovo Serbs and other minorities, KFOR has been the opposition. As indicated in the discussions about the “impossible” prospect of a full return of sovereignty from KFOR, the only viable exit strategy of a postwar statebuilding security mission, namely the statebuilding of an autonomous security institution, is not truly viable as long as the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity remains unresolved. In the environment of Kosovo it seems fairly unlikely that the KSF can be an institution fulfilling all

the security responsibilities of KFOR in all of Kosovo anytime soon. Partitioning Kosovo has been suggested as a possible solution to the conflict, but it has been deemed an unrealistic prospect by most major involved parties due to the possible political ramifications (Gow 2009, p: 158-161).

In combination, the dynamics of the relationships KFOR has with the two main ethnic groups in Kosovo help us understand how an international military presence in such a conflict can find itself on a very long mission, yet still be less susceptible towards the resistance associated with the duration dilemma Edelstein describes. These findings can be relevant for similar presences (with intrusive mandates) that operate in entities where there are strong divisions within the population, most likely with a majority supporting secession and a minority supporting continued affiliation with the state. When there is a conflict over sovereignty and territorial integrity, the return of sovereignty strongly associated with the duration dilemma becomes a problematic and unlikely prospect. The international military presence can end up being beneficial for the separate groups based on highly differing purposes. In the following section some possible implications of these findings for the future work of KFOR, and its potential role in a resolution of the status issue, is discussed.

The research question was: *What has been the purpose and outcome of KFOR's presence for the postwar statebuilding mission in Kosovo and the Kosovar population, and what can be the perceived utility of a continued international military presence for both the statebuilding mission and the population?* As illustrated by the above summary, the first part of the question has been answered by the completion of the analysis of KFOR conceptualised as the international military presence responsible for the security component of the postwar statebuilding mission, followed by an application of the theoretical concepts of the duration dilemma and factors influencing susceptibility towards the dilemma. These factors have been operationalised by using surveys from UNDP Kosovo, and interpreting the factors in the context of the Kosovo conflict. By analysing the threat environment and susceptibility towards the duration dilemma for both main ethnic groups in Kosovo dualities and complexities of KFOR's responsibilities have been identified, including failures caused by a mismatch between threat environment and KFOR's footprint in 2004, and challenges KFOR face due to the impact of the recognition game; both direct challenges to the provision of a secure environment and dynamics limiting the possibility of completing the actual

statebuilding aspect of KFOR and NATO's mission. The latter challenge will be difficult to overcome in the absence of a resolution of the dispute over sovereignty and territorial integrity. To answer the second part it is necessary to draw some possible future implications from the analytical conclusions, and consider the possible future purpose of a KFOR presence in Kosovo. It is highly interesting to ask whether or not these alternative analytical conclusions can be used to offer some alternatives to Edelstein's policy implications as well.

## **5.2 Possible implications**

The main policy implication Edelstein derives from his analysis of the 2004 civil disorder in Kosovo is the limitations of security provided by military force contra the achievement of a political solution. To claim that military force cannot replace a political solution in the long term is hardly controversial, yet as stated earlier, his analysis and implications are only true for the Kosovo Albanian population, and furthermore only relevant when painting a very broad picture of the situation in Kosovo. This study of KFOR has revealed a potential alternative analysis of the same events and additional developments in KFOR's mission, using the same analytical tools.

First of all, when analysed explicitly from the perspective of the military presence and not the postwar statebuilding presence as a whole, the events of 2004 cannot be identified as an example of a duration dilemma in itself. However, a political duration dilemma can be identified in part as causing the outbreak of inter-ethnic violence. The implication of this must be the need to comprehend any potential frustration within a population due to its potential for causing violence, and adjusting the military presence to be able to handle any potential threats to human security that may arise from such a frustration. KFOR failed in this regard. Given how significantly KFOR failed, with a few honourable exceptions (Tillberg & Tillberg 2011), to perform its security responsibilities those tragic days in 2004, it is perhaps not the ideal event to use as an example of the limited value of military force.

The lack of political progress on the side of UNMIK's work was undoubtedly a contributing factor to the outbreak of violence. But the political situation in Kosovo is still unresolved, and KFOR is still forced to intervene at times. If anything, the case of Kosovo and KFOR can help us understand the dynamics of a prolonged mission in an entity with a complex conflict over territorial integrity and sovereignty. To merely argue the merits of a political solution



contrary to a continued military presence becomes too simplistic. Edelstein is perhaps aware of this, as he also identifies that military force can be a useful tool for aiding the political process. The argument here is that Kosovo and KFOR can turn out be a very interesting case for understanding how international military force may be a valuable tool for efforts to accomplish the achievement of that all important political solution.

### **5.2.1 The military duration dilemma in an unresolved political conflict**

The analytical conclusions of this thesis suggest that during an unresolved conflict over sovereignty and territorial integrity such as the one in Kosovo, a military presence is less likely to encounter problems with the duration dilemma. The presence is likely to have very different relations with various groups in the population that support separate political solutions, but until the conflict is resolved, the continued presence can be perceived as beneficial for differing reasons by different groups. What is the implication of this? Essentially, it is the importance of understanding that when you undertake a postwar statebuilding military security mission in an area with an unresolved dispute over sovereignty, it is likely that you will have to be there for a long time. The facts that the Western Powers and the government of Pristina first of all was unable to gain a UN endorsement of the Ahtisaari plan and replace UNSCR1244, and subsequently gained less support more slowly than expected for the unilateral declaration of independence, could in combination suggest that the feasibility of finding a political solution has been slightly miscalculated. It is quite simply very complicated to identify a solution to which the parties can agree. The bargaining space is perhaps entirely non-existent. To discuss a potential solution to the Kosovo conflict and how it can be accomplished is not the intention of this thesis. Rather, the purpose is to identify the potential role of an international military presence in such an endeavour. To fully understand this attempt at a complication of Edelstein's main policy implication it is necessary to go back to the threat environment and the basic purpose of the military aspect in postwar statebuilding.

It has been argued that security is the most basic need in postwar statebuilding, and that the purpose of the security provided by an international military presence is to fulfil a necessary condition for the success of other postwar statebuilding enterprises. In the context of the discussion in this section, this means that unless the security concerns of the separate groups

are addressed sufficiently, it will be very difficult to accomplish a political solution. This leads back to the threat environment factor in Kosovo.

As the reader recalls, for the Kosovo Albanians, the international intervention and military presence externalised the security forces of Belgrade. The main security concern was alleviated through the externalisation, and will be fully alleviated once Belgrade recognises itself as an external actor in Kosovo. Until then, the international presence serves as deterrence against further involvement. Granted, such an involvement appears highly unlikely. A hypothetical thought experiment can illustrate the dynamic more clearly. Imagine that the entire international security presence left Kosovo tomorrow. What would then prevent Belgrade from redeploying security forces to Kosovo, at least to offer protection for the Serbian minority? If that minority came under threat from further inter-ethnic violence similar to the one of 2004, would not Belgrade be under pressure to ensure their security? As is often the case with explanatory models, this scenario is based on some unrealistic assumptions. Yet it highlights the perhaps primary benefit of KFOR's presence for the Kosovo Albanians. The government of Serbia does not recognise Kosovo as independent or itself as an external actor. On the most basic level, it is the continued international presence that ensures the continued externalisation of Belgrade, which is to the benefit of the Kosovo Albanians. Until Kosovo is fully recognised as an independent state, with its own military capabilities to constitute a similar deterrence, it is likely that the Kosovo Albanians will welcome a minor international military presence for exactly this purpose.

For the Serbian minority in Kosovo, however, the greatest security threat originates from the potential for further inter-ethnic violence within Kosovo. In the absence of the externalised security forces of Belgrade, in the final instance it is the international security presence which provides security for them. KFOR is not responsible for the 'daily' security provision the police are supposed to handle. The international military presence is, however, expected to have a responsibility for the provision of a secure environment, in particular during extraordinary circumstances. It can be useful to remember the mandate of the KSF; security tasks not appropriate for the police and crisis response. Basically, in the event of (semi)organised inter-ethnic violence targeting minorities, such as the unrest of 2004, KFOR must be expected to intervene and provide security. In the course of a statebuilding enterprise, these responsibilities would be expected transferred to the KSF; however, as the analysis

revealed, the KSF is not considered a credible provider of any such security by the Kosovo Serbs.

This last point is extremely important for a major implication of this analysis. As indicated by several surveys referenced previously, the Kosovo Serbs have very low levels of satisfaction and trust towards the autonomous security institutions in Kosovo. The recent opinion polls from the hot spot of conflict Mitrovica is particularly telling in this regard. KFOR was by far the institution most Kosovo Serbs identified as a key provider of security. What is the implication? When the security institutions of the state is externalised, minorities in the entity not supporting independence can be expected to consider the international presence the most credible source of security. What Edelstein does in his policy implication is recognising the limited value of security provision within Kosovo for the Albanian majority in comparison with the need for a political solution, yet he overlooks the perhaps most important of KFOR's tasks; replacing provision of security for Kosovo Serbs that the now externalised institutions of Belgrade were responsible for.

### **5.2.2 The postwar potential of military force in disputed areas**

NATO and KFOR are supposed to contribute with neutral peacekeeping. They are also statebuilders, through the establishment and development of the KSF. But when groups within the population do not recognise the state you are building, the normal exit strategy of statebuilding, a transfer of responsibility to a '(re)built' institution, becomes a problematic prospect. Hence, Edelstein rightly asserts that the international military presence cannot really achieve anything in itself independently of a political solution to the conflict. It can merely aspire to be a credible guarantor of security for all involved parties. But given the aforementioned intrinsic security requirement for a political solution, isn't that rather important?

The problem with the argument that military force has limited value in comparison with a political solution is that it ignores the more complex relation between them: military force is a political tool, and can contribute to the achievement of a political solution. As alluded to in the prior paragraph, the international military mission in Kosovo cannot really end until a solution to the contest over territorial integrity and sovereignty is achieved, since a transfer of all security responsibilities in all of Kosovo to a autonomous security institution there is

practically impossible until that point. But a possible alternative is that such a point will not be reached without the guarantee of KFOR's continued presence afterwards.

If security for Serbs in Kosovo is a key condition for finding a political solution in which Serbia recognises itself as an external actor, which currently seems to be the only feasible solution, that recognition may very well be conditioned upon an international security guarantee. If the autonomous institutions of Kosovo are not perceived as credible sources of security, then the absence of a transfer of all security responsibilities to autonomous institutions can be a condition for a political solution. In other words, the utility of military force may be limited, but it might also have the potential to actually contribute to the achievement of that all important political progress. Avoidance of the duration dilemma is dependent on a credible promise of returned sovereignty. UNMIK and its policies prior to the 2004 riots contributed to the perception among Kosovo Albanians that they had become a hurdle on the way towards independence, and as such it makes sense to argue the merits of pursuing a political solution. But that political solution which could enable a possible return of sovereignty is actually dependent on the involvement of all parties, which includes both Serbia and Serbs in Kosovo. The fact that the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and violent clashes following Pristina's attempts to exercise authority have contributed to a certain split between the government of Belgrade and the Serbs in North Kosovo illustrates further potential complications. Even if some kind of agreement is reached between the government of Serbia and the government of Pristina, it is not given that the Serbs within Kosovo will embrace it. Continued resistance towards the authority of Pristina could create further security deteriorations similar to those of 2011. Edelstein concludes that a military presence should be willing to stay the course despite the duration dilemma, to prevent the re-emergence of violence. It will most likely be necessary with an international security presence in Kosovo for a long time.

Interestingly, according to the surveys within the population of Kosovo that is available, KFOR appears to be the most likely source of an international security guarantee. Thus, it can be argued that KFOR should remain in Kosovo, and perhaps not decrease its footprint any further. In addition, it reveals a problematic aspect of another dynamic identified in this thesis. The civil disorder of March 2004 and the second half of 2011 are two very different events, yet they have something in common; both are security situations requiring KFOR

involvement caused by political developments, damaging relations between KFOR and Kosovo Serbs. In 2004, frustration in the Albanian population led to violence against Serbs and other minorities, and KFOR for the most part failed to provide sufficient security. In 2011, attempts by Pristina to exercise control over border crossings in the north caused resistance among Kosovo Serbs, resulting in violent clashes between them and KFOR. Both instances were damaging to the relation between KFOR and Kosovo Serbs, which is problematic if KFOR has to be a credible international guarantor of their security.

Let us do another hypothetical thought experiment. It has previously been argued here that KFOR is unlikely to face the duration dilemma among Kosovo Albanians until they are no longer needed to ensure the externalisation of the government of Serbia. Assume now that Belgrade recognises Kosovo as independent from Serbia. The return of sovereignty associated with the duration dilemma now becomes a potentially realistic concept, and as such the promise of a credible return of sovereignty may become an issue. But it is unlikely that the Serbs in North Kosovo will accept the recognition of Kosovo as independent. It could be expected that they would resist the authority of a Kosovar government and lean on the continued international presence for security, while simultaneously end up in violent clashes with them (not unlike the situation of 2011). KFOR might, at this point, encounter the duration dilemma among the Kosovo Albanians, who could favour a transfer of all security responsibilities to the KSF or another military institution, on the premise that it has the capabilities of performing the security responsibilities they require. Yet the recognition which enables the duration dilemma to occur could, as suggested earlier, be conditioned upon the continued international military presence. This outlined scenario is obviously somewhat speculative, and for the time being it's a long way from materialising. But if you look at the case of Kosovo from the perspective of KFOR, it seems fair to suggest that it is the most likely scenario in which KFOR genuinely faces the duration dilemma. It is a scenario in which they may meet demands for withdrawal among the Kosovar Albanians, while the Kosovo Serbs welcome their prolonged stay; and importantly, due to the potential for military force contributing to the achievement of a political solution, it is a scenario where the international military presence facing the duration dilemma has committed itself to stay.

### **5.3 Proposal for future research on the Kosovo case**

Ideally, the decision making process regarding KFOR's presence in Kosovo should be guided by factors associated with the security situation in Kosovo exclusively, but as it is suggested in the theoretical framework of the duration dilemma, it may also be a duration dilemma occurring at home for the intervening powers. As mentioned previously, this thesis is not concerned with the decision making process within NATO and contributing countries, for instance relevant for the issue of the normalisation of security arrangements and downsizing of KFOR's footprint prior to the unrest of 2004. That being said, it is without doubt a highly interesting area for additional research, especially in comparison with the current situation. There are ongoing discussions on further reductions of KFOR's footprint, and major contributing countries such as Germany and the U.S. are interested in reducing their contingents (Blic, 2012). Comments in the *Blic* article are aligned with some of the analytical conclusions of this thesis, and are directly connected to the duration dilemma. First of all, it reflects the position among Serbs in Kosovo that a reduction of KFOR troops could negatively impact their security situation, whereas it is stated that the Albanians are eager for KFOR contingents beyond what is required for their safety to leave. Furthermore, the discussion on a possible reduction in the KFOR presence appears more concerned with factors of time and cost than the security situation in Kosovo. There is a quote from a source within the international mission in Kosovo that reflects the duration dilemma: "There is permanent criticism that KiM costs more than it should. On the other hand the mission might turn out to fail since peace is not guaranteed here" (ibid). It is the suggestion of both Edelstein and this study that the international military presence should stay the course when facing a duration dilemma, be it within the population or a domestic duration dilemma, and not risk the re-emergence of violence and instability that in the final instance might undercut prior efforts.

It would be interesting to conduct an in-depth study on the decision making process in the period before the 2004 unrest, and identify possible connections between factors external to the security situation in Kosovo and the failure of KFOR in the performance of its security responsibilities. Such an analysis could subsequently be compared with the situation and decision making progress today, to identify whether or not similar external factors, for instance connected to domestic duration dilemmas for the contributing states, could be contributing to decisions on KFOR's continued presence that potentially could result in future deteriorations in the security environment of Kosovo. It is worth noting that it was deemed

necessary to increase the KFOR presence during the recent Serbian elections (B92, 2012). As stated in the very first paragraph of this thesis, there are inherent tensions between the separate groups in Kosovo that still re-emerges at times. Inter-ethnic violence on a larger scale might very well not be a closed chapter in the history of Kosovo. Whether or not the international security presence will be able to address such a possible development cannot be guaranteed, it has already failed greatly once before. Additional studies on KFOR, Kosovo, and the various possible duration dilemmas could turn out to be fruitful academic enterprises in the future.





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<sup>i</sup>All UNDP Kosovo Reports are available in the UNDP Kosovo online library:  
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